

BLUE HERON COVE



Fanny Lee McKinney



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The intruders stood in front of her [Page 236]

BLUE HERON COVE

BY

FANNY LEE MCKINNEY

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ILLUSTRATIONS BY

ADA C. WILLIAMSON



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TO
MARCIA AND CHRISTIANE,
AND THEIR FRIENDS, WHO CONSTITUTED THE
BOARD OF READERS

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BLUE HERON COVE

CHAPTER I

THE JUILLIARD

A LITTLE girl in a dark-green velvet dress stood at a window of the Juilliard in Fifty-xth Street leaning her forehead against the glass. She wore patent-leather pumps laced across the ankles, and silk stockings, and her dark curls were tied with a large soft bow.

And this little girl had *Never*

Played tag (squat, plain, or tree).

Eaten green fruit.

Slid down a cellar door.

Been on a picnic.

Had a girl friend.

Digged in the ground.

Eaten bread and molasses.

Chewed sassafras, spruce gum, or slippery elm.

Tried to beat anybody at anything.

Dressed up in long dresses.

Had on roller skates.

Been acquainted with a baby.

Made mud pies.

Slid on a sled.

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Made a dandelion chain.

Sewed a Christmas present for somebody.

Played with the garden hose.

Fussed with dough.

Made a bonfire.

Been in wading.

Sailed boats in a bath-tub.

Read the *Arabian Nights* or *Swiss Family Robinson*.

Known a boy well enough to say Hullo to him.

She was eleven years old and her name was Stephanie Rand.

The Juilliard is an apartment hotel designed for people of wealth, who live in the same luxurious rooms year after year. It is a rich and quiet place. A stranger coming into the lobby might wonder if he had turned into a church door by mistake, so dark is the woodwork, so heavy and somber the rugs, so hushed the elevators, and so like a Gothic chapel the panelled inclosure where the serious clerk remains. But no, perhaps a Moorish palace instead, for there beyond velvet draperies is a thicket of green palms quietly quivering and from their depths at the stillest hour comes a sound of falling water.

Beyond this water court (there are goldfish in the fountain) are the dining-rooms in white and gold, but Stephanie hardly ever went there. She had almost all her meals in Apartment Seven A, where she lived with her aunt, the Countess von Menzell, and with Fräulein Hammerschlag and Hannchen, the maid.

Here is Miss Stephanie Rand's program for the day:

Rise at eight. Be dressed by nine.

Breakfast at nine with Fräulein in the school-room.

Lessons and practising from ten to one.

Dinner at one with Fräulein in the school-room.

Ride in the limousine, followed by massage and rest, or vice-versa :—it depended on whether Aunt Katherine wished to use the car that afternoon. Anything to amuse herself until six o'clock.

Supper at six with Fräulein in the school-room.

Bed at half-past seven.

This was the ordinary program while Stephanie was well and in town. She went out to some of her lessons such as riding and dancing and to visit the masseuse. Sometimes she and Fräulein took lunch downstairs in the dining-room. Sometimes Aunt Katherine lunched with them in the school-room—but Stephanie wished she would not. And once in a while, when Fräulein did not go out, and it was bright, and Hannchen felt like it, they went up to the Park on foot.

On this day at five in the afternoon she leaned against the school-room window and brooded over a secret of her own. Two nights before she had begun to keep a journal in English. She wrote it after she had gone to bed and she had made with scissors a small snip in the mattress and hidden the journal inside. This snip was under the binding and was held together by a pin adroitly woven in. But what if the chambermaid should find it and report to Hannchen?

From this worry the familiar stretch of roofs offered no distractions. She had long ago found out which housefronts they belonged to in the street below—the pansy-house, the little-tree-house, the doctor-houses, the For-Sale-house, the old houses, and the brick buildings. All these roofs were covered with snow; not even a cat

was stirring and a dull February sky hung over everything.

Suddenly Stephanie threw back her head and became all attention. The telephone had rung. She darted into the hall and when Hannchen came and took down the receiver stood close to her side.

"I go see," said Hannchen, and then, "I vill go tell her."

She went and knocked at a door down the passage and came back in a moment.

"Madame von Menzell is at home *und* vill see him."

"*Ist es der Herr Vater? Ist es?*" whispered Stephanie pulling at Hannchen's sleeve.

"Ya, ya. '*s ist der Herr.*'"

Stephanie flew into her own room and was opening drawers and pulling things out before Hannchen could follow. She breathed fast and her cheeks had a little color in them.

But when Hannchen finally opened the door of Aunt Katherine's sitting-room and Fräulein Hammerschlag marched in, leading Stephanie by the hand, you would have thought that here was a wooden child. This was not merely because of the long wait before Aunt Katherine sent for them. Stephanie always became paralyzed just before she went in, and the father whom in absence her fancy had brought so near, seemed now that they came face to face to be separated from her by a dense fog of not-understanding.

If the others would only stay out how they could talk, and she might even move up close and lean her cheek against his sleeve as she had seen a child do at church! But people were always there—always had

been—and that made everything go wrong. She remembered two or three times when he asked her to walk up to the Park with him. She was frightened by Aunt Katherine's face into shaking her head, or Fräulein said that she had an appointment or a cold. Once he pulled out some slips of pink pasteboard and made quite a long speech about men that stood on each other's heads holding in their mouths poles upon which other men stood, about dancing, and a lady in the water with music on her tail (it was "covered with scales," he said). "How would you like that?" She shook her head and answered, "*Ich kenn das nicht, Herr Vater*"; which was the truth. She knew nothing of such men or ladies.

"What, you won't come!" And he turned away with a look that made her heart ache long after. There was no chance to explain that she hadn't known she was to come anywhere; Aunt Katherine sent her away to her practising at once. And he never brought pink slips again. He hardly spoke to her any more.

To-day the two persons sitting near a shaded lamp took no notice for a moment but kept on looking daggers at each other—Aunt Katherine very handsome with her elaborately waved gray hair and black eyes, and her brother-in-law, younger, handsome also, having gray eyes as hard as his companion's dark ones. He frowned and slapped the table with his gloves and as Fräulein and her charge walked in he said sharply:

"Then you refuse to consider any different arrangement but wish to continue as trustee of the property and guardian also?"

"Certainly. You should have made your proposition ten years ago. At my sister's death you gave up all

rights. You acknowledged then that it was her wish for me to take control and you allowed the Court to appoint me. Nothing has changed. I don't understand you. You have called lately with some hidden purpose. Please explain."

Fräulein cleared her throat and Aunt Katherine looked up.

"Here's the child now," she said in a cold voice.

"Oh, how'de do, Miss—er—your name always escapes me—Hammerschlag? Thank you. How'de do, Stephanie. The child's well, isn't she? She was busy with massage or something last time I stopped in."

Stephanie said nothing. When she used her native tongue it went lamely and had flavors of Fräulein and Hannchen mixed.

"Stephanie does not care to learn English," her aunt would say. At this the small dark face grew sullen.

Fräulein always liked to talk on these occasions.

"The dear child is now well, I trust, and will, unless some epidemic seizes on her or an accident, unforeseen and therefore by those who have her welfare on the heart unpreventable, occurs, in this enviable condition continue herself. You wish to hear how she conducts her lessons? Naturally. It is a parent's habitual concern for the welfare of his progeny. In Arithmetic then we reach the decimal. You will say perhaps that this is a slowness for one in her eleventh year. Yes, possibly. But consider only the ill health our little scholar has in the past frequently endured—the sore throat, the headache, the biliaryness, mentioning nothing of measles and similar disorders which occur before my time. I have the sorrow of saying that for languages the Miss shows small apti-

tude. I refer to the French, Spanish, and also the English tongues. In the *Deutsch*, thank Gott, she shows a natural proficiency, due no doubt to advantages most unusual in America, which from infancy she has, thanks to admirable foresight of an excellent aunt, particularly enjoyed. Only last week has Miss committed on the memory more than thirty poems of the ineffable Heine——”

“Never mind the poet Heine, Fräulein,” interrupted Aunt Katherine. “You and Miss Stephanie can go now. It is almost your supper hour.”

Stephanie made a second *knix* without raising her eyes to the tall gentleman’s face and was majestically ushered from the room. When the visitor left the Juilliard and turned toward the Avenue he walked slowly with head bent, and his stick, instead of making curving flourishes, struck the pavement slow and even.

“A dull, unresponsive little thing—Ellen’s child. She doesn’t feel the slightest interest in my existence. All taken up with clothes and massage and the Fräuleins. She’d probably refuse to leave, even if Katherine were willing. And what would I do with her anyway?” He pondered moodily and then hit the walk sharply with his stick. “Well, I’ll see that she gets fair play and her fortune honestly dealt with if I can.”

Stephanie’s father turned into the crowded Avenue which led southward to his own hotel.

CHAPTER II

A JOURNAL

THIS small book is mein and it is a Journal. One makes the Journal from writing every day. Amiel and one other French lady made them and Goethe even, as he travels. The Journal speaks ever of Nature, Vegetation und Mann. Sam in the elevator gives me this small book and I say nothings. I could have one secret, myself.

Now as I see how on each side stands one Day I determine myself to make the Journal even as Goethe and Amiel. But an entirely auf Englisch one. So—I learn the Englisch and shall speak him to mein Herr Vater once.

Every Day write I concerning Nature, Vegetation (which is very scarce in large Cities), and Mann. And of Womans naturally also.

12th February, 1914

Nature

From the limousine, who goes so quick, it is not easy to view Works of Nature, in particularly in Winter while Snow rests on her. I have seen to-day Hudson River, Grant's Tomb, Palisades, and Ferry-Boats, all works of great and glorious Nature. But Fräulein sits on that side and she being fat is most difficult to overlook.

Vegetation

I have count five Vegetations—Pine-tree, Park, Palm, Window-Box, Florists.

Mann

Mein Herr Vater is the Mann whom I wish to write most about Him. He comes Tuesdays or Thursdays and is more interesting than any Work of Nature. He is splendid and nice and schön and zierlich and edel and handsome—I could write a thousand Words over him. And he smell heavenly-beautiful.

Tante Katherine say "*Still!*" every Time I mention him. So—in this Journal I mention him much and hide the Journal.

Woman

I have known plenty Womans. We have here Tante Katherine (named also Countess and Madame from being married once to Count von Menzell which I was never acquainted mit he dies so long but I know Gustav, their son, which live abroad and come sometimes here, and I hate him while he plagues me and say I shall go abroad in School). So—we have Tante Katherine and Fräulein Hammerschlag and Hannchen Dietz and self.

And I know Mademoiselle and Mr. Carter in the Riding-School and Señor Tripas and the Teacher off Dancing and Miss Smith and the Masseuse and the Housekeeper and the Maids on this Floor. And the good Gaston and Elevator-boys and Doorman. And Persons all kinds where I go in the Summer.

And previously many Fräuleins have I known—Fräulein Schmidt, Fräulein Fronapfel, Fräulein von Schlo-dien, Fräulein Stolz. Before that they are Marie and

Sophie and Berta and they are mein Nurse. And once it was a kind Lotta which tells of Nixies and Kobolds and the Rhine fairies, which are pleasanter than klassik Works.

There was now for our rooms a old cross Chambermaid Delia and I must watch she never find mein Journal where I hide it in mein Bed.

17th February

Nature

Same. Mit more Snow.

Vegetation

Same yet.

Mann

Mein Herr Vater came.

Everything goes wrong when Herr Vater comes. I get no Chance to learn acquaintance mit. Fräulein talk so much and Tante look so cross and say, "Stephanie has no care to speak the Englisch well." (And it is a Lie.) Also myself I get a Fraid. But one Time, Tante being from the Room and Fräulein talking of the Poets I am behind Herr Vater's Chair and I touch mit mein small Finger where the Collar lies behind his Neck, and it tickles nothing.

The Hairs of mein Herr Vater are so beautiful. They fit like from Satin on the Head.

24th February

Nature

Nothings. I have Sorethroat. Mit Sorethroat must one stay in and perpetually gargle.

Vegetation.

Same yet.

Mann

Herr Vater is not come but I have a new Game to play. As I ride and as I walk and at mein Meals Herr Vater he is always there and I talk and tell him Things; speaking Englisch excellently well. I tell him of this Journal and how the h and s go very hard to write and all new and heavy Words must one chase out from the great Dictionary the next Day. And I tell him I am the only Child in Dancing School which speaks Deutsch alone. And I tell him of Gaston which bring our Trays. He is mein Friend. And how I hate Cousin Gustav. And I tell Herr Vater I wish he would come here every Day and be alone together always. So—Fräulein see how I hold my one Hand up and she say “What is this?” I go mit Herr Vater in Hand and she see me how I whisper by myself and asks what have I said? But it is to Herr Vater I am speaking.

Except this Game it goes here very dull.

I have a Worry—there is such great Explosions in the Subway.

As I leave Goodnight mit Tante I ask her, “Comes Herr Vater soon again? myself I worry something explodes him in the Subway.”

But Tante makes cross look and say “Unsinn!”

Tante Katherine is very impolite on me sometimes.

2d March

I wonder by myself had Henri-Frederic Amiel any Fun when he was young?

I know how it goes like—having Fun. At Magnolia

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and in the White Mountains Children do it. Their Nurses talks together and the Children talk and whisper and run in the Veranda. And they jump upon the Rocks and they scream and one Boy soils his white Suit mit Mud. I have a Fraid to play mit Boys. They run and kick and on the Seashore they will throw Sand in a Person's Ears. I stay in the Pergola by Fräulein. But I could watch them having all kinds Fun.

5th March

The Property—I write that Word there very large while I have much Curiousness over him. The Property. He is something which People talk when they think I cannot hear. I learn him first once long before. Mein Fräulein which was here then say to Mademoiselle, "Where there is Property there are quarrels." Then they see me standing close and whisper "sh." Tante and Gustav, each time Gustav come, talk of the Property, but they stop when I come near. And now Herr Vater and Tante—they too must talk of the Property.

It is this they speak of before I am in the Room. They speak low but angry and as I walk mit Fräulein in I see their angry looks.

Tante shall not make such Looks on Mein Herr Vater.

Anyway she takes a Headache from it and lies this Moment on the Bed, Hannchen says, mit smelling Bottle.

6th March

Instead cross Delia we have by this Apartment a new Maid, Leona. She has red Hair and name me ever "Dierie." Myself while I fear she see too well within my Bed where I keep this Journal must make Distrac-

tions every Day. Mornings before my lessons I tell her the History of my Life.

13th March

An Event arrived to-day which I must immediately sit down upon before it forgets itself.

I have a Friend.

Her Name is named Sadie Wienerwurst. She live near to Columbus Avenue in Malaria Apartments (or such a Name) and her Vater live there by her!

It comes like this:—Fräulein has, herself, the Sore-throat and must perpetually gargle.

Now the Sun shines bright and Tante being out Hannchen singt:

*“Ya, ya, ya, ya!
Weisst nicht wie gut ich dir bin.”*

Also she is happy and we go in the Central Park.

I love that Central Park to walk in him. Hannchen too, must love him now while there in the Mall she meets a Deutschland Friend name Max. They are so rejoice to meet they must sit on one green Bench and talk most loudly of the Vaterland. (Never before am I on any Park Bench to sit.)

After while I am weary of that Talk and I go upon another Bench alone.

On the Walk before me goes a Girl on Rollerskates. Coat like some kinds of Furniture she wear and one Braid of Hair and a Cap mit Buttons. It is not, however, the clothes which please, but the wonderful Performance, now mit the one foot, soon mit another, always mit Gum in the Mouth.

Suddenly she stop and sit next to me on mein Bench and say, "Hullo."

I think in mein Interior this truly is a healthy Child. (It is while so many Children are contagious one may not speak to them.) And I too, say "Hullo."

In one Moment that Girl and I are Friends together. We talk and tell ourselves everythings in the World. Sadie names her name and address and I names mein name and address and Sadie names her School, which is Public School Number 179 and I say I have the Lessons by mein Fräulein and Mademoiselle and the others. And Sadie say "How you talk funny like some kind of Dago?" I say "What is Dago? Are you Dago?" And Sadie say "No sir, American. We are all in New York City born, Fritz and Emma and Walter and Klaus and Sophie. I can learn you to talk like other kids," and I say "That is just how I wish to learn the good Englisch of other kids." So—I learn much new Words from Sadie and some even she write on the Walk mit a Stick Chalk. They are: Cop, Swell-guys, Rough-necks, Lid, Nifty, Afraid Cat, Just crazy, I should Worry, Gee. We tell each other all kinds Secrets—What we rather have to eat—What we think on Religion and what color Hair Ribbons. And Sadie ask which you like most, Koni or the Movies?" And I say "Myself, I have never taste either." "They are not to eat. They are Shows named Koni Island and Moving Pictures. Hasn't your Vater ever took you there?" "Never," and Sadie say "Well, water you know about that?" And I say "Yes, I know about Water." But she mean nothing of Water. She but speak that way every time she is surprise. Und then she tell of her Vater.

He lives right in that Apartment mit Sadie, the Mama, the Grandmama, three Brother, Two Sister, and one Baby. Every Evenings, as he comes in, he brings Some-things nice in the Pocket—Popcorn, Gum and jumping Toys from Rabbits. Every Saturdays he must take all the Small Ones on some Shows. And Evenings after the Supper he plays Games—Tag, Rough-haus, and all kinds Games. And they could climb upon every part of their Vater. And they name him Pop.

He has a Business of Delikatessen and lives on the top of it.

Sadie now say, "You come round by our House Saturday. Get your Nurse to bring you, and I ask Pop he shall take you to the Show by us." And I say, "I thank you Sadie, I have one Music Teacher then."

"Well, how is this—I come down to your House any Day you choose?"

Now I must hang the Head. I have shame that Sadie come and find by me no Vater.

But I think and say, "When you come Tuesday at Five mein Vater is by *me* then."

"Shall he take us out some Place?"

And I promise, "Yes."

It was now that Hannchen call me and I must take Adieu from Sadie. She presents one Stick Gum and as she goes away calls out,

"No fun to-day," and "See you Tuesday sure."

And I look behind and she look behind and does wink on me mit the Hand.

I should worry. I should worry the whole Night and disconcert mein Bed and throw the Blankets on the Floor.

At last have I switch on the Nightlight to write down that Worry:

If Herr Vater might not come next Tuesday, What?

If he come how shall he ever guess it is proper he invite Sadie and me on Koni Island?

Sadie has no Eleganz. She wears that Coat like brown Furniture and that brown Cap mit on the both sides two white Buttons and the Shoes of Sadie are wrinkled. Such a Girl, shall the Doorman let her in I wonder? And shall they telephone her name, Miss Sadie Wienerwurst? And shall Tante Katherine become nifty?

Had I one Vater to live here by me I should worry nothings.

And it could be nicer than Mr. Wienerwurst or any other child's Pop, while mein Herr Vater is of a Dearness most extraordinary.

CHAPTER III

PLANS

SOMETHING was in the air in Apartment Seven A, Hotel Juilliard.

The Countess von Menzell was the one that knew. Undoubtedly her son Gustav knew also, for he advised her in many things, but he lived abroad.

When Fräulein Hammerschlag handed Madame a list of new school-books and asked for money to buy them Madame said they would not be needed.

When Hannchen answered the telephone it was a message from a steamship office, or it was the hotel office wishing to ask Madame about the suite, or it was a storage company. And when she brought the mail there were several letters all at once from Madame's son, and also a new postmark, Dresden.

Gaston, the waiter, seemed to have something on his mind.

Leona, the chambermaid, acted very odd at times.

The only one totally unconscious was the one most involved. She had no attention to spare for what was going on around her. All she could think of was next Tuesday afternoon.

Never had she done so bold a thing before. To invite a visitor, and not a friend of Aunt Katherine's at all, not a dancing-school person even, but a strange acquaintance of the Park! She was forbidden to talk to strange

children anywhere. Not that she ever wanted to. She was afraid of children, especially boys, and those in the dancing-class made the hour unbearable, calling her "Schnaps and Pretzels." Some of them talked German with their Fräuleins, but at all other times they spoke English, very fast, with funny words mixed in like "punk" and "skiddoo." She wished she could talk like that. Why was it they knew how and she did not? She pronounced these words over to herself and wondered what they meant.

But Sadie had been friendly. Sadie did not make fun of her. Sadie could teach her those new words.

Aunt Katherine had visitors; why not she? Two parties had been given for her in the ballroom of another hotel, but there was no fun in that. It would be fun having Sadie come and if the whole plan could be carried out it would be *allerliebst*.

Yes, but how was that to be?

First, would they let Sadie in? No one at all like Sadie did go through the revolving doors, at least while Stephanie was outside waiting in the limousine. Very few children went in the Juilliard, but if they did they were not like Sadie—more like herself. You could tell Sadie was not of them—the doorman himself could tell, by her coat, her cap, her braid chopped off at the end like a brush, the ribbon so stringy, the shoes so creased and dusty, and that way she chewed the gum, in one side of her mouth.

But supposing Sadie and all her peculiarities once safe inside and at the clerk's desk, what then? Would he have her telephoned, "Miss Wienerwurst to see Miss Rand?" Then up here in the apartment Hannchen would

pass it on to Tante, "Miss Wienerwurst." Tante would raise her eyebrows and wrinkle her nose slightly—"Wienerwurst?"—like that. And then explanations must begin.

Now supposing all this safely over, how would the time go by till *Herr Vater* came? She could show the dolls and toys. There was a whole cabinet full of them. But they were stupid objects and would not keep Sadie from noticing and asking questions. "Where is your *Herr Vater?*" "Will he be in soon?" "Why! Doesn't he live here?"

And if *Herr Vater* arrived first? She must then have the boldness to tell him before Tante Katherine and Fräulein that he was expected to take her and a strange girl (explanation about meeting Sadie in the Park) to that "Koni Island" (explanation that such was the custom of Mr. Wienerwurst).

Stephanie with all this on her mind went around like a sleepwalker.

On Saturday morning she said cautiously to Hannchen,

"Hannchen, did you notice two days ago in the Park a girl?"

"What kind of a girl?"

"A roller-skating girl who sat and talked with me while you were with your friend from the Fatherland." Stephanie spoke German, as always in her own household.

Hannchen eyed Stephanie's reflection in the glass.

"What does the Miss know about that friend of mine from Germany?"

"I know nothing of him. I think only of that girl."

"You say nothing about him to Madame?"

"No indeed, why should I? I interest myself only in the girl that talks with me and even her I have not mentioned to Tante because—because—Hannchen, she is called Sadie Wienerwurst and I find her most agreeable. Do you think——"

"Listen, little Miss, I have indeed seen how you make acquaintance with a strange child in the Park but I hold my mouth and say nothing to the *Hammer* or Madame. I make no trouble. See that you do the same. Keep silence over my affairs and I will keep it over yours. If all goes well we may both enjoy ourselves in Central Park."

She nodded her head many times and then watched Stephanie narrowly and said,

"I suppose you cannot tell me what it is that wakes Madame so early in the morning?"

"Tante up already?"

"Yes, and has given orders that you have no lessons but shall visit Helene's with her and afterward the dentist's and be fitted to a whole new outfit. Do you know anything of this?"

"No. It is not time for the dentist; I don't go there till May, before we leave New York. I'm glad there are no lessons but it is stupid at Helene's too. I have plenty of frocks. What do you think it is for?"

Hannchen shrugged. "There is something afoot I don't understand. Perhaps Fräulein Hammerschlag does. She sticks the nose into everything. What I hope is that nothing shall spoil my plans, with Max just come and everything right for a good time."

Well, Hannchen could be managed; they had made

bargains like this before. At the same time it was best to be wary in consulting her. Stephanie thought of Leona, the new chambermaid, and of Gaston, who was a discreet person and her friend. And she thought how it would be best of all to explain things beforehand to *Herr Vater* himself.

But that was only a wish and she knew it was out of the question. No use scheming to go into the hall and watch for him to come up. She had tried it once and gotten a terrible scolding. She had even thought of hiding in Aunt Katherine's sitting-room behind the sofa and popping out before Tante was ready. But she would never really dare.

All this filled her mind as she waited, a pale, bored little girl, in a big chintz-upholstered chair at the dress-maker's, or stepped in and out of the limousine in the shadow of her imposing aunt. She was used to shopping. Tante loved clothes and she herself had prettier frocks than any other children that she saw. But to get them was ever the same tedious business.

On Monday the Countess' preparations could not be kept secret any longer in her own household.

Stephanie came in with Hannchen from a visit to the dentist's and lo! their rooms were full of trunks. They had been brought in from the store-room and were standing everywhere, more trunks and boxes than were ever got together for their going away in May.

And Mademoiselle was there, saying she had come to say farewell. She had received a note of dismissal from Madame.

"What a surprise to find Fräulein Hammerschlag packs her trunk and will leave also!"

Fräulein came into the school-room and her eyes and nose were red.

"It is true. Three days' notice with no other reason than that Madame made other plans for Fräulein Stephanie! This is a strange treatment for one so deeply versed in the classics. I cannot understand. A few weeks ago I have Madame's assurance that I am engaged for another year—and now this sudden dissolution, this complete departure, as indicated by trunks. But where or when I know not. However, the maid is not dismissed, she is good enough to be kept and doubtless can tell us everything."

"Can I!" snapped Hannchen in German. "There you are mistaken for I am told no more than the Miss herself. I take orders. I suspect something. But these boxes are the first to tell me the worst. I don't like it any more than you."

Stephanie had stood all this time in the middle of the floor listening to each in turn and staring round. Other Fräuleins and Mademoiselles she had seen come and go, and luggage had been packed when Aunt Katherine went south or abroad, or they left New York in May. But there was something disturbing about this, about the way they talked and the packing boxes intruding everywhere.

She followed Hannchen into the next room. "Please, Hannchen, what does it mean? I did not know we were going anywhere. Is it to Hot Springs? That is such a tiresome place. Shall I have no mademoiselle until the Fall and then a new one? And why is Fräulein Hammerschlag dismissed? She has stolen no fur collar as did Fräulein Stolz, and she surely does not make a wedding like Fräulein Biederbaum, and Lotta long ago.

With a nose as Fräulein's there is surely no prospect of weddings. Is Tante going away too? When do we start? Not to-morrow surely? I must be here to-morrow afternoon."

As Hannchen stepped around Stephanie's room putting away the hat behind mahogany doors in the wall, the gloves in their box in the chiffonier, the coat and muff on a chair to be carried out to the clothesroom where they always hung, Stephanie kept beside her, looking in her face and asking these questions. At length Hannchen went and looked out in the hall, then shut the door carefully.

"Listen. Has Miss ever heard any talk of Dresden?"

"Dresden! There is where the school is which Gustav speaks of last time he is here. He tells Tante it is a good place for me and when I speak and say I like America best they both look at each other as if they suddenly remember I am there." She drew a quick breath.
"Why do you speak of that city?"

"Because the name is on several letters which Madame has lately posted and on one which she receives. And I hear her speak that name to a man who calls on business. And it stands written on cards which are prepared, I think, for the luggage. That is why I mention Dresden."

"Hannchen! What is it that you think?"

"I think Madame and you and I shall leave here soon in a big ship. How soon I don't know but this looks like something quick. It has all been since two weeks ago. She wrote letters very fast one night after *Herr Rand* called. I have suspected things but could not know

how soon. What a bother! It spoils everything. I would give notice except that it takes me to the old country and I suppose I may get leave to go and see my cousins. That will be something."

Stephanie had nothing more to say. She crept out to the school-room and pressed her forehead against the glass at her favorite window. She tried to think. Everything seemed to whirl. She must get up her courage to ask Tante what it really meant.

Every evening at half-past seven Stephanie went into her aunt's room to say good-night. At this time Aunt Katherine almost always stood or sat before a mirror being helped to dress by a girl named Marie, who came in from outside just for that. Tante would inquire if Stephanie had had a pleasant day, how her throat felt and whether she had tried on her new frocks. To-night she asked especially about a certain white silk coat, then said "*Gutnacht,*" put her lips somewhere near Stephanie's ear and was looking all the time at the effect of an ornament against her lace. After she had decided about it she was surprised to find Stephanie there beside her yet.

"What is it? Isn't Hannchen waiting for you?"

"Yes, Tante, certainly." To ask anything of Aunt Katherine always took extra breath and made one's words step on each other's toes. "But I like—I hear—I wish—there are many trunks and boxes but it is surely not true that I shall go to school in Dresden?"

Madame laid down her hand mirror.

"Who has been talking to you?"

"No one, Tante, but Hannchen sees a letter with the address."

"Hannchen is inquisitive and forward like all other servants."

"And Cousin Gustav spoke of it. Fräulein and Mademoiselle are dismissed and everything makes me wonder. Cousin Gustav laughed at me and said I was too much American. But I am American, I like it best here. I want to learn the English, to speak it excellently well and have nice words like 'punk' and 'cops,' and I know a girl who could teach me, too. To-morrow when *Herr Vater* comes I would like to talk to him a minute. Pardon, Tante, if I speak to him just a minute alone together about a thing—a secret. Other girls whose fathers live there can tell them any little thing. If I were in Dresden would *Her Vater* come there often?"

"Go into the next room, Marie. Take the chiffon to mend. Now, Stephanie, has any one beside Hannchen talked to you?"

"No, Tante."

"That is all right then. No one knows yet and see that you say nothing until after to-morrow. Yes, you are to go to school in Dresden. Your Cousin Gustav and I have decided it is best. You are getting too old for the present arrangement and I don't care for American schools. Of course the plan is agreeable to me as I can be near Gustav, and in any case I prefer living over there. When I returned after the Count's death I did not expect to stay, but your mother died and left you in my charge and I have stayed ten years—long enough surely. The school we have chosen is a famous one. You'll soon enjoy it there. I don't know what you mean about your father; you mustn't bother him with questions. He may not call to-morrow afternoon——"

"What! not come at all to-morrow?"

"No, some other day before we go will do as well. Now hurry off to bed."

After Stephanie had gone Madame sat thinking a moment and her determined, cold face expressed her thought: "It is well the change is being made at once."

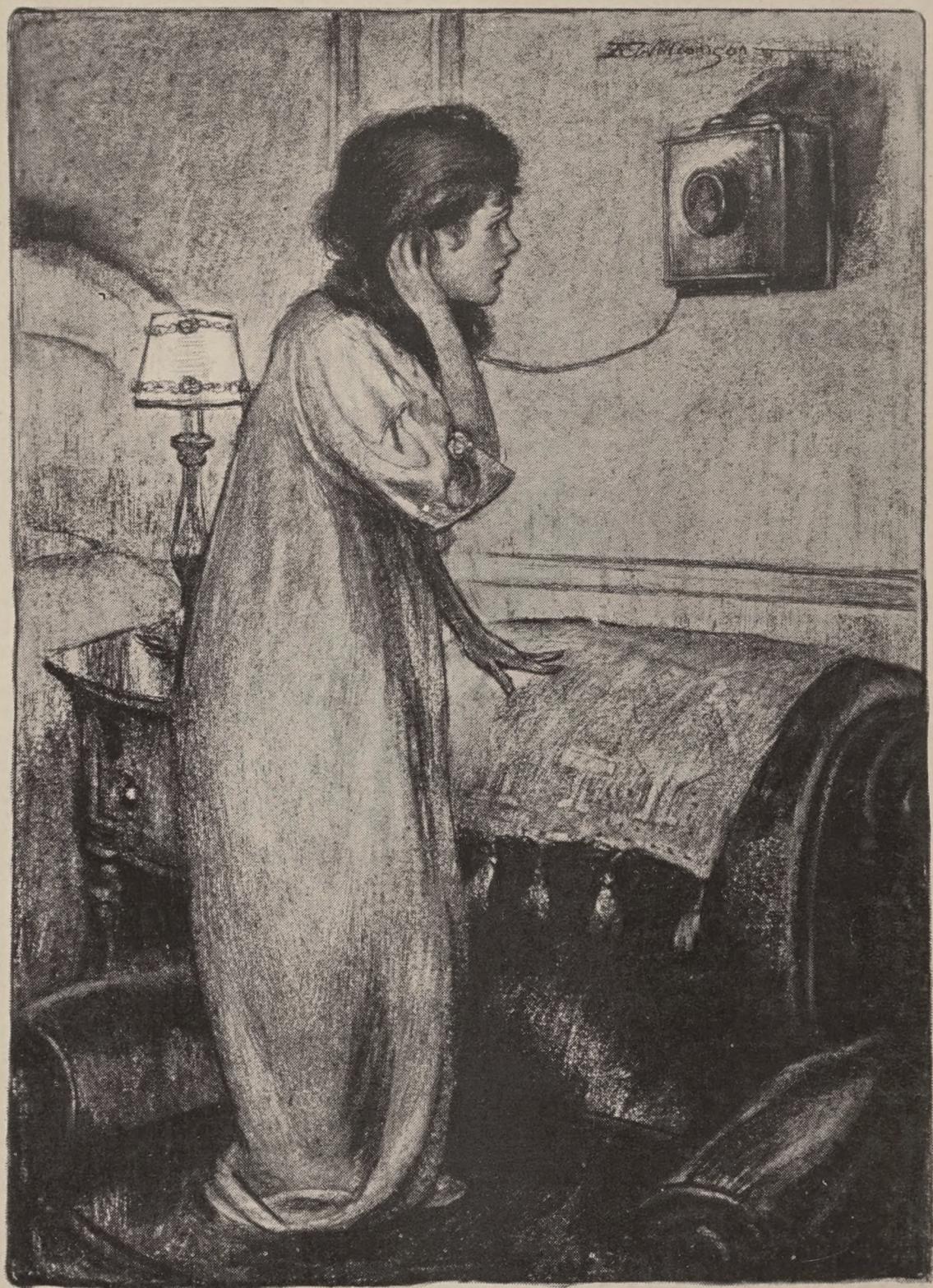
There were two points she had not cared to mention; —that they were to leave on Wednesday evening and that she meant to take good care to keep Mr. Rand away altogether, for their going was a secret from him most of all.

The Countess von Menzell was Stephanie's legal guardian, having been so appointed after the death of her sister, the child's mother. The mother had wished it; the father had consented, not knowing what to do with a small girl baby on his hands. She was a sickly child and for years he scarcely saw her.

Meanwhile the Countess was making her own plans, or letting her son, a very sharp young German, make them for her. Stephanie had inherited a fortune. Her Cousin Gustav wished to have the handling of it. Everything had run smoothly for him until now, but she was getting to an age when uncomfortable things could happen. She might want to go to her father and he might persuade the courts to give her back to him. That would not suit Gustav at all. On his last visit to New York he had warned his mother about this.

Then suddenly she was warned in another way. Her brother-in-law himself began to hint at it.

Not that he seemed to grow any fonder of his daughter. She knew he thought the child cared nothing for him and he had given up making advances to her. But



Stephanie repeated in a shaky voice

something else was on his mind. He said things that sounded threatening. Madame felt alarmed and she decided on sudden, secret arrangements of her own.

Stephanie, after Hannchen had turned out the light and left her, lay stiff and still till she heard certain steps go by and doors shut, then she popped up straight in bed.

While she was being undressed she had thought out a way. It was a hard way and probably very naughty. But she resolved to go ahead and try it.

Her aunt had gone out and so had Marie. Hannchen, who was supposed to sit just outside her door, had slipped away into the hotel corridor, as she did every night as soon as the coast was clear. Fräulein had been out all the evening; she was to leave for good to-morrow. Stephanie was the only person in.

She turned on the little pink-shaded light on the stand by her bed, crept into the hall and brought back the big telephone book. There was a telephone on the wall of her own room, too high for her, but safer than the low one outside her door.

“Vanderdorf, Plaza 55,400.”

She closed her door softly and climbed on a brocaded chair.

“Vanderdorf, Plaza 55,400.”

“What number, please?”

Stephanie repeated in a shaky voice. She knew the telephone lady downstairs by sight; she wore eyeglasses and looked rather cross.

Only a few times had Stephanie used the instrument before—times when Fräulein was out and Hannchen didn’t want to bother. But people couldn’t understand her, and besides, Madame found out and forbade it.

"Hotel Vanderdorf," a snappy voice was saying.

"Please I like to spik on Mis-ter Rand."

"Who?"

"Please, Mis-ter Rand, Mis-ter Alan Rand."

Then came a long wait while the receiver grew heavy in her hand and every muffled tread in the distant corridor might be Hannchen's.

"Mr. Rand is not in his rooms."

"Ach!" she had not thought of this possibility. "He come soon *herein*, you think?"

"What?"

"If he is not soon—right away—I am useless to spik, and that is bad, while it may not come another chance to spik *mit*."

"I can't understand a word you say," and the voice could be heard telling some one else, "Say, there's a party talking Dutch."

"Maybe you please say him something for me when he come. Say, a message, yes?" This was an idea born of urgency.

"Oh, a message. Yes, you can leave a message."

Stephanie drew a long breath and started in:

"Please say this message on him. Say I invite a girl of the Central Park name Sadie Wienerwurst come tomorrow round here and have promise *Mein Herr Vater* shall on Coney Island take the both. Say on him, please excuse such liberty but it is while Mr. Wienerwurst *mit* Klaus and Sophie and Sadie and Ignatz and the baby make so like that, I promise how *Mein Herr Vater* make the same. And say him the thing to do is to come early and send in telephone the word, 'Mr. Rand wish Miss Stephanie come right down on him.' So-o—I go down

and we wait together in some great black chairs of leather who stand in lobby here till Sadie come and we plan someway I need not to go abroad. I *lieber* not to go. Dresden is too far. I *lieber* stay by him. Say please, this whole message and I think this is the all of him and I thank you and I ask pardon I spik so rap-idd while here *kommt* Hannchen. Adieu."

She slammed up the receiver and jumped into bed. So comfortable did she feel to have everything arranged that she dropped off to sleep before Hannchen opened the door and looked in at her.

In the middle of the night she woke to find the big telephone book beneath her spinal column. No wonder she had dreamt of camels.

CHAPTER IV

A MEETING IN PHILADELPHIA

ON the same Monday about the time that Stephanie in New York came back to the Juilliard and found the trunks, Mr. Alan Rand was entering the old ferry wharf at the foot of Market Street, Philadelphia.

He strolled over to the ticket window in the corner and inquired, "Is there a train from Blue Heron, Cranberry County, due here about now?"

"Number 28, due at Camden 10.35, twenty minutes late."

Mr. Rand bought a ferry ticket in order to pass into the waiting-room, where there were seats, and found a place on one of the circular forms around a pillar in the middle of the room. Being an impatient person he hated delay, and being a New Yorker he blamed the wait on William Penn. He said to himself that he might have done a dozen important things in this twenty minutes. Then second thoughts settled him back against the post. After all this was the important thing he had come from New York very early in the morning to accomplish—to meet a lady from Blue Heron whom he knew from recollection would be highly flustered if he missed her.

Twenty minutes—that meant forty. Why, he remembered now, that morning train was always at least forty minutes late in winter. You lost a half-hour at, what was the place? Cedar Swamp Junction—waiting for

the W. J. and S. to come up out of the pine woods; or storms had tied up the road at Barkantine and washed out the bridge at Bog Island Bonnet.

He tried to find Cedar Swamp Junction in the time-table but could not because it had been changed by a Land Improvement Company to "Harboretta Vista." Blue Heron itself was still there luckily, and Cox's Run and Tide Marsh Neck and Newasiwak and Cranberry Low Bottom.

The time-table faded from his gaze. Waiting-room, gates, ticket-taker vanished. Across Blue Heron meadows on a spring morning a train clattered between the ocean and Swallow Bay. Pale blue the water under the pale March sky, which was filmed over here and there by soft clouds like your breath on a window pane. From the train window a young fellow looked back longingly towards the village, to a square, weather-beaten old house where the figure of a little spare woman waving persistently could be distinguished, and to the station platform where a boy his own age stood with face toward the receding train.

The bay was sure to be covered with wild fowl—red-heads, mallards, bald-pates, and even a canvas-back maybe in his black-penciled white suit—sailing along close to the bridge, until startled by the train, the ducks rose in long black streaks against the sky. And he was going back to town to leave it all!

Behind him his Easter vacation at Cap'n Price's, Miss Janet's oyster pies and affectionate fussing, long evenings of talk and yarns round the stove in the old store, long days of sport on Swallow Bay with Steve Price, his beloved pal. Before him office grind and boarding-

house fare to be endured till summer brought him back to Blue Heron once more.

Twenty-five years ago! and he had let them all slip out of his life. When he called for Miss Janet Price by long distance yesterday he did not know for a certainty that the name existed any longer at Blue Heron. Now he found himself all eagerness for news. Steve might have married, settled, had children. Perhaps he lived in this city; perhaps owned a line of sloops. A fine promising fellow like Steve would make his way anywhere.

Mr. Rand snapped open his watch. Time for Number 28 at last.

He folded away his newspaper and stood up to watch a crowd of passengers rushing from the boat.

A small, worried-looking woman, who had waited till the last on account of all the packages she had to carry, especially a heavy peach-basket with a rope handle, suddenly heard a voice above her.

"Let me relieve you of those," and she looked up inquiringly at the figure of a tall, imposing stranger.

But there was something in this gentleman's expression which, after one moment of timid scrutiny, made her shed her basket and bundles in all directions.

"Oh, Mr. Alan!"

While he shook her hands he said nothing but kept the same expression.

"Oh, Mr. Alan, how you have changed! And yet when you looked at me I seemed to see you a young lad once more. Twenty-five years, isn't it, or twenty-six, since you came in June? I counted up last night." This reminded her of something, even while the tears stood in her eyes. "It was after the telephoning, Mr. Alan.

I hope it won't be necessary for you to do that again."

"Do what?"

"Call me by telephone. I was quite upset when they sent over from Ed Bissell's store and spoke of 'long distance,' and then when I heard your voice and understood you were in New York City my limbs almost gave way under me. From New York City to Blue Heron—think of it! And the great expense. Ought you to incur it?"

Mr. Rand burst out laughing. "You haven't changed, Miss Janet, anyway. Now what are these? Here, porter! Take this lady's packages. Call a taxi and put them in."

Miss Janet Price reached for her bundles in alarm.

"Oh, no thank you. No, I couldn't let you take them," she shook her head at the porter. "I couldn't let him carry these, Mr. Alan. Only little presents for some of our boarders but I know just how to take hold of them. Some fresh weakfish and a few clams at the bottom which do add to the weight; a brace of ducks Cap'n Bill shot; some of our fresh eggs. These smaller parcels are merely things the neighbors asked me to attend to, as I was coming to town, you know. Mrs. Pharo's feathers, Mrs. Nummy's—ahem—just a package of Mrs. Nummy's, the Tonkins' parlor-lamp, and a few little articles of mine beside. There was scarcely time for everything, I come up to town so seldom——"

Mr. Rand picked up all the packages and stacked them into the porter's arms. Miss Janet opened her lips to protest. Then she meekly gave in, just as she had always done to a domineering lad twenty years ago.

Outside came another halt.

"Oh, an automobile? Oh, you must please excuse

me—I really couldn't. The street-cars are right over there. I've become accustomed to *them*, though I generally walk up the hill to get on, for if they *should* lose control and slide down I should hate to think afterward that perhaps my weight had been the last straw. However they are a convenience. But an automobile—no, I really couldn't."

"Miss Janet, you must. It's snowing."

"Is it?" She glanced downward. "Mr. Alan, you *haven't* any rubbers on! In this weather! Now do buy some at once, if you haven't brought them with you. I will—yes, I will get in, if you will make it go to some store where you can purchase a good high pair."

"Surely they don't wear rubbers nowadays at Blue Heron?" said Mr. Rand as he took his seat beside her. But Miss Janet was sitting on the edge of her seat.

"I've never been in one before, though they pass our house constantly on the new boulevard."

"How is Cap'n Price, Miss Janet?"

This served to get her attention. She settled back and looked troubled in a different way. "I'm afraid you would think there was a great difference in my father, Mr. Alan. He was still a hale and hearty man when you were there, though the trouble with Cap'n Tom Newbold about the stolen money had begun before that, I think."

"Yes, I remember about it."

"The money was a great loss to us but I think Tom Newbold acting so treacherous was what father couldn't get over. Then Steve's death broke him entirely."

"Steve dead! Miss Janet—I never knew it."

"I didn't know how to send word to you. Yes, he

slipped between his boat and the dock and his hip was crushed so that he died afterward. They said Cap'n Newbold was on the dock right near and never put out a hand to keep her off, but I don't wish to believe that. Well, father changed then. He's very peculiar and forgetful at times. They had made Ed Bissell postmaster and of course all the trade went to his store, and that nearly broke father's heart. I use the store for a dining-room for the boarders, but father always makes such a fuss. Not that——" Miss Janet drew herself up. "Not that he is childish or useless. My father is a very fine man and his mentality is totally unimpaired."

Seeing that this was a delicate subject Mr. Rand did not press it. He was trying to master his disappointment. Steve gone! Then he would never know that he had meant to keep faith with him, and in one matter had done so against much opposition.

By this time they had progressed some distance up Market Street through the crowded traffic.

"We'll take a drive through the parks and end up at the Bellevue-Stratford for lunch," he said.

"Isn't that a very expensive place? There's a very nice dairy lunch near here. And besides, I am so sorry but I think I had better get out and go and deliver the fish, and the clams, and the eggs, and those two ring-necks."

Mr. Alan Rand, who had accustomed himself for many years to making plans solely for Mr. Alan Rand, glowered at the motley packages. But when he met the deprecating eyes of their owner his face relaxed to a grin.

"I guess you will. This air is getting a trifle fishy."

As for the birds I haven't traveled through Philadelphia with a brace of ring-necks since I brought some from Blue Heron and afterwards left them in a roll-top desk in the Penn-Urban Building by mistake. "Whew!"

It seemed the fresh fish and clams were destined for Germantown, the eggs for West Philadelphia and the brace of ducks for an old gentleman who lived south of Market Street.

Thus the plans which should have been unfolded in a quiet room at the hotel had to be told as they went along. Mr. Rand found it hard to begin. Harder still, after he had plunged in, to make Miss Janet understand.

At the first mention of the subject of these plans she sat up quickly and her face flushed with delight.

"Oh, Mr. Alan! And I never knew you had a little girl!"

Her next comment was: "Lives with her aunt? I don't understand. You can't mean you live somewhere else and not with your own child?"

Thus it was necessary to go back into the past, which he would rather have avoided. He told a few facts in a brief, hard way and finished: "So you can see it was her mother's wish. I was alone in the world, totally unfit to have the charge of a mere baby. Besides, it became a question of the child's fortune—and—Well, a fellow has some pride. I would rather have been shot than raise a hand to touch it!"

"That was ten years ago. I was away two years and she always seemed to be sick when she was little. But of late years I've been to see her regularly in town. I suppose these arrangements would keep right on if these double dealings hadn't come to my attention."

"Double dealings?"

Yes, he had almost positive proof of it. Stephanie's aunt had been recreant to her trust. That is, she had given over the investment of a large portion of Stephanie's fortune to her son, Gustav, who lived abroad. "A young scamp and gambler but the only being Katherine really loves beside herself." When Mr. Rand went on about South American mining stocks—high dividends—nothing coming back to the trust fund—Miss Janet Price became very nervous and put up her hand.

"Don't try to tell me. Money matters—words like 'dividends'—give me a singing in the head. My mind is getting confused."

Mr. Rand went on. Though he had not yet absolute proof, information which had come into his hands had led him to ask on other pretexts for the custody of the child. If she became his ward he could look after her property, he explained. This was refused. Two days ago came the alarming discovery that the Countess von Menzell was making hasty plans to carry the child off secretly to a German school.

"And that is why *I* had to think in a hurry. And when I thought of you and had the nerve to hope that after all these years you might be the same Miss Janet to me, I called you up and routed you out of Blue Heron at some unearthly hour this morning and I posted down here to meet you. You see it's now or never."

He began to set forth his plans, made in haste under the pressure of necessity.

"The best help has come from my man, Boals. Remember Boals? He used to run an elevator in the Penn-

Urban Building when I was there, and I think he went down to Blue Heron with me, once; an undersized fellow with big ears?"

Miss Janet remembered all about Mr. Boals.

"Well, some weeks ago when I first learned of this I asked Boals to find out, if he could, when Gustav von Menzell was expected in New York again, and he managed to get acquainted with some of the help at the Juilliard—a waiter, Gaston Jeannerot, who had served meals to their apartment for a long time, and some of the maids. A friend of his, named Leona, had herself put on that floor. That was how this new scheme became known to me. It seems Boals has felt a deep dislike of my sister-in-law for many years. He's a smart little chap and faithful to me—I suppose. One can't tell. It's his interest to be."

Miss Janet, troubled by his hard tone, said in a low voice, "I am sure Mr. Boals would go through fire and water for you."

And now at length he began to set forth her part in this—the part, that is, that he hoped she would assume. They were at lunch by this time in the Bellevue-Stratford restaurant. Some curious glances were attracted to them, for Miss Janet Price wore country clothes and she had an odd little pointed face, tanned and deeply wrinkled with worry. What was her connection with that thoroughbred man of the world and what was he breaking to her that caused such disconcerted shaking of her black felt bonnet? (It was shaken at the waiter too when she explained to him why she could not eat:—she was all upset by meeting an old friend and riding in an automobile for the first time.)

At first Mr. Rand had said something that caused her unmixed pleasure.

" You don't mean—do you really mean you wish to send your little girl to us, to Blue Heron? "

" Yes, if you're willing."

" Oh, Mr. Alan, how delightful! I do love children so. And this one is yours. I can hardly believe that you would trust her to me. When do you say she is coming? *Thursday!* Not this Thursday? Oh, my goodness, I must get right back and set the south chamber in order, have the small chunk stove put up, order a barrel of sugar, and bacon—does she like bacon? "

" Sit down, Miss Janet. You can telegraph all that."

" Telegraph to Mrs. Bill? Oh, that wouldn't do at all. Mrs. Bill Pharo, young Cap'n Pharo of the Life Saving Station's wife, is there looking after father, and she has had no experience with telegrams. She was Maria Crammer. Besides, how could I tell her where the stove is in ten words? "

" See here, Miss Janet, you aren't to stew and worry about this. If you do me this great kindness in addition to past kindnesses for which I've returned you nothing but neglect, it's to be on my own terms. We'll discuss that later. Now listen! "

Mr. Rand talked steadily on and thought he was making himself clear until Miss Janet said:

" But Mr. Alan, if you just asked for your little girl I don't see how they could refuse." And then, after more explaining, " Couldn't you just go up there and take her by the hand and walk away? "

" No, no, that couldn't be done. Don't you see that her aunt is the legal guardian and has the law on her

side and could make a great scene and have me stopped? But if I can get Stephanie spirited away out of reach first and then tell the Countess what I know, I think she will give her up to protect Gustav. Anyway Blue Heron is a very safe place until things are settled, and Stephanie must go by another name there for awhile. You'll have all the fun of naming her over again, Miss Janet."

And now he came to the part that troubled him most, for he had not been able to work it out himself:—how best to get Stephanie from New York to Blue Heron. He must stay in the city to see her guardian at once. It would be best to send her, part way at least, by automobile.

But who could be entrusted with that task? Boals? He couldn't drive a car. Some friend? Some hired chauffeur? He ran through the possibilities and rejected each one.

"I don't trust many people—that's a fact, Miss Janet. You see now why I picked on you, out of the women I have known. For this job now, who could I get to be on hand at the minute in exactly the right spot, take her safely and secretly out of the city and down into Jersey (I've looked up the route), meeting you somewhere half-way, say at Perth Amboy? (You can stay here until Thursday in order to do that, can't you?) It must be a fellow that can handle a car and be able to handle any situation that might arise. He must be as trustworthy as—as you, Miss Janet. Of course no such rare bird is waiting to be caught."

"Mr. Alan, I know that man."

"What!"

"Yes, the very one you have described if I understood

right. He is not in this city now. When must you leave here?"

"I must go this afternoon."

"Then you won't be able to see him, but I can. He is coming up to town to-morrow. A young man who knows everything about automobiles. I think he could make one. He is quick and has good judgment and for character, I'd trust him as I would have trusted my own brother."

"Who is he?"

"His name is Dan Smith."

"Where is he now?"

"Down at Blue Heron."

"What credentials can he give?"

Miss Janet was unusually positive. "You can accept this young man's services on my word alone. I promise that he will be all that you desire."

Mr. Rand looked sharply at his old friend. "You're willing to assume so much? That is very high praise for your candidate."

"He is worthy of it," said Miss Janet.

"Then I agree," said Mr. Alan.

They had finished lunch and now withdrew to a corner of one of the reception rooms.

Their talk seemed to be temporarily at a standstill. Mr. Rand said there was no hurry; he would not leave now until 5.50. Miss Janet began to notice the splendors of the walls and furniture nearby.

"These marble pillars and these chandeliers remind me of the capitol at Trenton," she whispered.

She thought it must be a little like Venice too. "I've seen pictures where they had those rich scenes painted on

the furniture. Window hangings shirred like this look very elegant. Are they draped that way where your little daughter lives? You see I am studying how I can make the south chamber homelike for her." And then, still gazing round, she said:

"I hope you won't mind having an upstairs room yourself."

"Beg pardon?" said Mr. Alan, wakened from his moody thoughts.

"I was saying I would have to put you in an upstairs room."

"Put me? How do you mean?"

"Why, when you come down to Blue Heron. You'll be there next Sunday, I suppose."

"No, I have an engagement for the day. Thank you, Miss Janet, but you mustn't expect me down at Blue Heron. This matter and my own business affairs will keep me occupied. And you know you're pretty hard to reach for week-ends. I spend nearly all my Sundays up in Westchester County playing golf."

He said this carelessly, not seeing the expressions that chased each other across Miss Janet's face. She thought there must be some mistake, but Mr. Alan sat there easily, holding his hat on his crossed knees and staring straight ahead as if the subject were at an end.

She put her finger to her lips and little dismayed wrinkles came around the bridge of her nose.

"Wh-wh-why, Mr. Alan, I don't understand at all. I don't see what you mean. You said they wouldn't give her up—— But now after all this trouble and risk—— Why, what is it for if you don't ever see the dear child at all?"

"That has nothing to do with what I'm trying to make right," said Mr. Alan frowning.

"But the dear little girl, what will she think?"

This question touched his nerves.

"Good heavens, Miss Janet, haven't I made things clear enough! The child cares nothing about me—hasn't any more interest in me than in the merest stranger. Why should I expect it? I gave her up, as I explained, and Katherine has made just what she wanted of her." He threw down his hat and made a tormented gesture with his head. "Limousine, massage, Fräuleins! Why, actually, I've been there when they've brought word, 'Miss Stephanie wishes to be excused, she is being manicured'! Over and over I've tried to make friends with her, get her out alone with me, but it's no use—she isn't *for* it. She's like a wooden image when I'm there—and always in such a hurry to take the Fräulein woman's hand and get out of the room. Why, Miss Janet, letters come from her in the summer written in German and copied out of an exercise book almost word for word!"

Whirling round to face his old friend with this umbrage he saw that tears puckered her eyes. With a muttered exclamation he flung himself back in his chair, then made an excuse to leave the room.

When he returned it was with telegraph blanks, timetables, and a Blue Book in his hands. He proceeded to write down directions for Miss Janet's friend, Mr. Dan Smith; for Miss Janet herself, to cover every situation; finally he made out a check payable to the order of Janet Price.

Miss Janet had lost her zest. She was tired and dis-

composed and had little to say, but the figures on the check made her gasp a protest.

"I made it enough to cover the extra expense this will put you to. You see," he hesitated. "Stephanie has been brought up luxuriously. I wouldn't wish to have her suffer hardships or too much change. You will give her a good room, I know. She will need a bathroom adjoining it. She'll have to have some one to wait on her and you will require extra help in your housekeeping. In fact I want you to have everything made easy for you to look after the child. Do you understand?"

"We have a nice bathroom now," faltered Miss Janet.

"Then there's the matter of lessons. She ought to have a governess—I suppose a German, as she can hardly speak her mother tongue. Personally I hate the idea. But I don't want to interfere too radically. I don't know much about little girls. Well, we can write these things later." He stood up. "It's getting toward train time. I'll take you first wherever you wish to go."

Miss Janet could hardly make up her mind about anything, she was so tired and collapsed.

"I think I could compose my mind best at Wanamaker's, in the basement where the bargains are."

To Wanamaker's Mr. Rand took her but detained her in the cab to go over all the plans again.

"I shall wire you when they start and later write fully anything you wish to know. And I can run down to Blue Heron if you really need me. And Miss Janet, I've been trying to say it all afternoon—only I can't, I owe you so much. Do you remember how I used to call you Aunt Janet? You didn't mind, did you? I was

only sixteen and the old house over the store at Blue Heron was home to me. All that kindness, and this, make too big a score. I can't repay—or thank you."

"No, no, Mr. Alan, please stop. It is so wonderful to have you trust your little girl to me. Just think, she will be my special care! I don't understand all you've told me. Some of it seems like a bad dream, and I have a feeling, one of my strong feelings, that you must be in some way mistaken about the child's regard. I don't know. I'm rather upset. It's been a great deal in one day, the ride and the hotel and seeing you. But you can be sure I will attend to everything. There's only one question more I'd like to ask."

"Yes."

"You say the dear child will have to go by some other name than her own in Blue Heron?"

"Yes, I think it will be better while she's there. By Fall I suppose everything will be arranged so I can put her in some school. But just at first there's danger of the newspapers getting hold of this, or of some other unpleasantness. You can manage it, can't you?"

"Oh, yes, I shall enjoy that! Let me see—there are the queens of history, Semiramis and Zenobia, and there are Faith, Hope, and Charity, and Vivian and Aurora, and surnames like Beaufort and Somerset."

Mr. Rand laughed and held up his hand in protest.

"But that is not what I wished to ask, Mr. Alan. It's about her real name. I don't think I ever heard that name. Would you please write it down for me?"

He tore a leaf from a note-book and wrote,

"Stephanie Rand."

She studied it and glanced up at him searchingly.

"Stephanie? It's a pretty name. Has she heard all about the weeks and months you spent at Blue Heron long ago?"

"She never heard of Blue Heron in her life."

"What, not about our house or your hut on the point or the time you were frozen in and lived two weeks on wild oysters?"

"No."

"But—but I'm sure she would like those stories."

"Once for all, Miss Janet, don't you understand that I never have a chance to say ay, yes, or no to her. I'm just a stupid stranger that comes to call. 'When daddy was a boy?' Why it would bore her to death!" laughed Mr. Rand bitterly.

CHAPTER V

LEONA GOES FOR A WALK

By Tuesday morning many persons at the Juilliard had the same delusion:—that Miss Stephanie Rand was going abroad with her aunt. Tante herself thought so, also Fräulein, Hannchen, the hotel porter, the elevator men, and a young man in a striped apron who had come to pack the piano, books, and bric-a-brac.

All seemed to take it for granted. Of course they knew nothing about her standing up on a brocaded chair and telephoning last night. She almost wished they did. It is hard to have faith in a secret if you are the only person aware of it and are a child, at that, against grown-ups. Besides, any small arrangements she had ever made that differed from Tante's arrangements had ended in a fizzle.

What then were her surprise and pleasure to find that one other person understood the real facts of the case! She didn't know this until noon, but the first hint came at breakfast.

It had been a solemn meal. Fräulein was there with her hat on, as she and her trunk were to go away directly. They sat in pained silence until Gaston broke it up.

Out of the portable hot cupboard from which he served their meals he brought with a flourish Fräulein's favorite dish, a certain kind of sausage.

"Ach!" cried Fräulein, pulling out her handkerchief,
"Die schöne Wurst!"

After she had wiped both eyes she fell to on the sausage with relish. And while she was thus engaged Gaston suddenly bent close to Stephanie's ear and whispered:

"Come early to your lunch. I have one fine secret for you then."

Fräulein took her departure and the morning passed without lessons. Stephanie was to eat her lunch alone so she was waiting when Gaston came to lay the cloth. She had almost forgotten his secret, being on tiptoe about the afternoon.

"Please, Gaston," she began in English. "Went you ever once on Coney?"

"Mademoiselle would signify Coney Island? But assurément. Often in the summer months."

"At what hour of the afternoon must one set out to reach to there?"

"It is in the evening ever that I go."

"But Gaston, answer this, at what hour are children from public schools out?"

"A thousand pardons for my ignorance but I am a bachelor, Mademoiselle."

"Then Gaston, answer this——"

"Mademoiselle Stephanie," interrupted Gaston, "attend to me." With his finger on his lips he stood for a moment listening, then went to the door into the hall and closed it carefully.

"You hear me this morning when I mention a secret?"

"Yes, Gaston."

"It is this:—Mademoiselle takes this afternoon the usual nap?"

Stephanie's lips set. "Hannchen has said I must sleep. While the books make such disorder here we shall dine downstairs and so the nap first. But I cannot sleep. I will not. Only listen, Gaston——"

"Attend to me." He looked steadily at her and now spoke very earnestly. "Mademoiselle shall repose as usual. Especially between three and four you shall remain in your room, whatever happens. If Hannchen comes to rouse you say that you are still fatigued and would rest a little longer. Remain thus till four. At that hour certain ones will come for you."

Stephanie sat up straight and pressed her hands together.

"Gaston! You know it then? You know of Sadie and *mein Herr Vater*?"

"Yes, yes. It is your father's action but that is the secret and you must never reveal. Not a word! Ah, Mademoiselle, you would not make distress for poor Gaston by telling this?"

"No, surely. I understand. It is the same secret, itself, I am knowing all the time. It is pleasant you too know, Gaston. I do all as you have said. Till four no one shall dress me. Or shall I dress myself, Gaston? I can dress myself alone a very little."

"No, Mademoiselle. It is to wait. Merely wait. And whatever happens, not a word of this talk. You surely comprehend?"

"Indeed, Gaston, yes."

At half-past two, therefore, Stephanie lay upon the couch which stood at the foot of her bed, and Hannchen spread a down quilt over her.

"You shall stay quiet till I come for you. It may be an hour."

"Yes, Hannchen."

"Mind, no pattering around the room, pulling out drawers or opening the door. Last night I find it shut after I have left it open."

"Yes, Hannchen."

"A naughty miss shall never dine downstairs with the fine ladies and gentlemen."

"Yes, Hannchen."

Stephanie lay upon her back, coverlet under chin, eyes and lips tightly closed. Hannchen wondered a little and thought to herself as she went out,

"The miss is surely about to have some illness, she is so ready to go to bed lately."

Stephanie's clothes for dinner were laid out on a stand; —a white cloth frock, white stockings and buttoned shoes, petticoat, and ribbon. Looking between the brass bars of her bed she could see these, and on the other side, in a wardrobe trunk, which stood open, an elaborate new coat of white ribbed silk with pearl buttons and a braided belt.

"What ought one to wear to Coney Island?" she whispered to herself. "Sadie would like to see that coat."

From the school-room beyond her bath sounded crackling of papers, intermittent hammering, and voices. All the large and small boxes had now been brought together there for the hired packer to fill up. Hannchen's

footsteps went along the hall as she brought articles from madame's rooms to be packed.

Stephanie lay still with her head turned so that she could watch a little clock on her bedstand.

At three Hannchen could be heard telephoning for the limousine. At quarter past Tante herself was giving some directions just outside the room. As soon as the door into the hotel corridor closed behind her the voices in the other room grew more cordial and hilarious. Hannchen and the packing man were making friends.

Now the ordinary afternoon sounds became distinct; —the frequent slide and click of elevator doors, the throb of machinery in some subcellar, automobiles in the street, elevated trains, and the mixed roar of the great city. Also there was the singing of a strong wind around the building.

It was half-past three.

"He could come any moment now."

Stephanie lay on her side and resolved not to take her eyes from the hands of the small ivory clock again.

After a little her lids grew so tired that she closed them. Perhaps she dozed. For, without hearing the door open, she was aware suddenly that some one was standing in the room.

She popped upright from the pillows. "He is come! He is come!"

But it was only the red-haired chambermaid, Leona, with towels on her arm.

"Ach," said Stephanie, disappointed. "I did think something had happen——"

"Sh!" said the maid. She tossed the towels on a chair and came close to Stephanie. "Listen, Dearie,

they're waiting for you with an automobile in the street. Can you dress as still as mice and come with me? And not let Hannchen hear a sound? Because it's a secret—see? We'll just walk out together and never bother no one. That's the girl. Now where's your clothes, that green frock and the fur coat? Whisper, Dearie. We must be awful quiet."

But the green frock was nowhere to be found.

"Hannchen must take her out to brush." She pointed to the white things on the stand. "I could wear those."

"Well, well! All right. Only hurry."

The tap-tap of a hammer followed by gay exclamations, singing, and laughter, came from two rooms away. It was evident that Tante was still out and that Hannchen and her new friend were having a good time.

"Lively, ain't they? Well, keep it up, you in there, till we get good and gone. There, your shoes are buttoned. Now, Dearie, where's your heavy coat?"

"That fur coat? He stays always in the clothes-press from the hall."

"Bother!"

By this time Leona had a red face and was breathing quick. "Well, let's hunt for something else."

She pulled at things in the closet, opened and shut drawers. But the heavy wraps were none of them kept here.

Stephanie tip-toed over and lifted from its hanger the new white silk coat.

"Please, I could wear this."

A second later it was on her and a white felt hat with a bird's breast against its side.

Thus arrayed she now stood by the door holding fast

to Leona, who had her other hand upon the knob. The maid glanced back around the room.

"It seems awful to leave all this behind. Listen, Dearie, ain't there some little thing, something that you kind of specially like, that you want to take along?"

"Truly! It is good that you remind me. Please excuse the mattress, Leona. I find another place for it next time." She left Leona to burrow in her bed till she found the small note-book.

"A journal," she said, holding it up. "All from English wroted. I exhibit this to *mein Herr Vater* and he learn what attention I give, off the English language."

"Land! What's she talking about? I meant your gold watch, Dearie, or a bracelet, or something handsome from that dressing-stand."

"Such things? Well, those I don't care, anyway. They could wait till we are from Coney Island come, yes?"

"I don't know if you'll ever get 'em. Well now, how quiet can you step across the hall?"

A few seconds and it was done. They stood in the public corridor outside the door marked 7 A.

Instead of walking toward the elevators they turned to one side and went down some winding metal stairs.

On the floor below they stepped around a corner and there, to her surprise, Gaston stood waiting. He said nothing but handed Leona a black coat and hat, then stooped and touched Stephanie's dark curls.

"Best luck to you, Mademoiselle."

When she looked again he was no longer there, but

she hardly thought of that, she was so struck with Leona's appearance.

"So! You look now as Hannchen in the black hat."

"As near like her as I could fix myself," declared Leona.

They went down more iron stairs, always on their tiptoes. And down and down and down, till Stephanie's ankles ached and she was dizzy from turning always to the right.

For the twentieth time Leona said, "Sh!" And now she whispered, "This is the last flight."

The freckles stood out queerly on her cheeks and her hands shook as she straightened her own hat, then gave a final pat and pull to the white hat and coat.

"They'll sure think you're going out to a party."

"It is *some* kind of party. Yes?" Stephanie whispered, looking up at Leona with a happy little laugh. The minute they came out of a small passage into the lobby she began looking for *Herr Vater*.

But he was not there.

Nowhere in the entrance hall or the rooms opening from it as far as she could see, certainly not sitting in one of those large carved chairs as she had suggested by telephone. Leona walked straight on.

No one spoke to them as they passed out. The serious young man had some one talking to him at the desk. The doorman looked as supercilious as usual.

"Waiting with an automobile in the street." Why, yes, that was what Leona said upstairs. Well, here were several cars drawn up in front of the Juilliard. Which one would it be?

Leona did not even glance at them. She turned her

companion sharply to the left and started at a fast walk down the block. A strong wind came buffeting at their backs. It was a dusty, grim March afternoon.

"Where *are* they?"

But Leona was in too much of a hurry to reply. Past the house with window-boxes full of pansies, past the front door flanked with little trees in tubs, the two doctors' houses, the For-Sale house, the brown houses with high steps. They reached the brick buildings and came out on the noisy avenue which Stephanie had never crossed on foot.

She looked in every direction. There were a great many people but neither of the two she was expecting.

"Is it to find Sadie we go here?"

"Quick! we got to cross," Leona said.

There were elevated trains overhead, and screeching trolleys passing in the covered street. They dodged great horses' heads only to find themselves in the way of automobiles. But they reached the other sidewalk and Leona clasped her side and drew a long breath.

"What you ask me back there, Dearie? Sadie? I don't know what you mean. But thank goodness, the young man's there all right, waiting where they said he'd be."

Drawn up at the curb in front of them, on the cross street, stood a rather shabby, covered car. A man with big shoulders was squatting down beside the front wheel. He glanced and saw them, and slowly began to straighten up, as they drew near, unfolding into the tallest person Stephanie had ever seen. She was by his knees. Only by tipping her head back as far as it would go could

she see his head. He beamed down through shell-rimmed glasses which rode upon a big nose and said:

"Well, you got here all right, I see."

Leona said, "You're Mr.—"

"Dan Smith."

"I thought so. There's the right number on the car. Just for a minute as we came across I couldn't make you out anywhere and I thought Mr. Boals had told me wrong, or something. If anything had went wrong—my stars! This is the little girl. I hope she won't have to go far without more wraps. She'll take cold in these doll clothes. I couldn't find anything else to put on her."

"That chap, Boals, said his governor'd meet us somewhere."

"Well, I should hope so. She's a sweet little kid, worth more attention than she's ever got. Old-fashioned as the mischief and talks the funniest dope. Well, take good care of her. I've done my part. Dearie, kiss Leona now."

Stephanie hardly knew when she said good-by to Leona. She was completely bewildered by her first glance into the car, which showed her it was empty.

Then she was inside, with the curtains fastened, and they were whirring through unknown streets. In front the chauffeur's massive shoulders blocked the view. Dust blew in her eyes. The car swung around corners, bumped over car-tracks, joggled across a stretch of cobblestones, slowed up, stopped. Through the smudgy side panes she saw a board fence on one side, a cobbled square full of vehicles and hurrying people. The chauffeur stepped out and toward the front she could see, between buildings, the river and its farther shore.

The river was gray, the sky was gray and stormy, but suddenly the sun seemed to shine out over everything. Close at hand a voice was speaking that Stephanie knew.

"Where's this car from?"

"*Boulevard Garage, Eighth Avenue.*"

"Is your name Dan Smith?"

"Yes, sir. It's all right. The little girl's inside. Have you been waiting long?"

"No, just came. You're ahead of time. A boat's just in but you'll have to wait. I must have a chance to talk with her, and you too, before you start."

At this Stephanie managed to unfasten the curtain and slip out.

She saw her father standing there beside the car. He lifted his hat and she made a curtsy—a tall man in a fur-lined coat and a little girl in dressy white.

The boarding hid some place where there was building going on. Over beyond was the West Shore ferry entrance with streams of people and trucks and motors passing in and out. Trolleys clanged, wheels clattered, the wind whipped at everything.

They both had to shout.

"You got away all right?"

"Yes, *mein Herr Vater*, and it is good you get here too. Myself, I fear we miss you and spoil our whole enjoyment. Is that Coney?" She nodded her head toward the west side of the Hudson. "I have seen that before but never know it is the Island of Coney. One goes very close—not?—to see those camel and slides and peanuts and band playing and persons which visit the moon and—much more of which Sadie has describe for me? It is unfortunate we lost Sadie. It is perhaps the

school, which keeps her late. School Number 179 it is which she—how you say?—frequents. Sadie frequents School Number 179 and I don't know when it is out, and Gaston, while he is a bachelor, don't know. Tante don't guess Sadie is invited even. Tante could never like such coats as Sadie's. It is an ugly coat but it happens, maybe, that Mr. Wienerwurst must buy such ugly coats, while he has of children a great *as-sortment*, and of money——” finding herself involved in a long sentence and not knowing how to finish it, she signified Mr. Wienerwurst's lack of money by a shrug and an out-flung hand. “Delicatessen is surely not a rich business, *mein Herr Vater?* What you think?”

“I don't understand,” said Mr. Rand, bending from his tall height.

“Please, I speak of delicatessen, the business of the father of Sadie.” It was hard to speak English excellently well above the noise and confusion.

“Sadie? Is that your nurse?”

“*Aber no, mein Vater.* I speak of Sadie Wienerwurst, a girl which I mention last night, all about her. We meet in Central Park and it is then I say ‘Come round Tuesday afternoon, and she ask shall you take us anywhere and I promise Coney Island. It is a custom from Mr. Wienerwurst, as I have said by telephone.’”

Alan Rand looked down at the small figure in front of him in complete astonishment. He had scarcely heard her speak two connected sentences before and couldn't understand her now, but was amazed at the flow of language.

“A telephone message? Did you telephone to me?”

“Yes, *mein Vater.* I stand upon a chair. Was it bad

to do? I meant nothing bad. I merely wish to speak of Sadie and Coney Island and that Dresden school. The lady say 'Yes, you could send a message.' Was it—how you say—annoyance?"

"No, but the message? I didn't get it."

She looked up at him dazedly. "Didn't get? But why then have you come? Has Tante sent— Must I go back?" She glanced toward the ferry house in bewilderment. "But it is here we go on Coney Island? Yes?"

"Coney Island! Not a bit of it. What put that into your head? Come, this wind's too cold to stand in. Get inside the car and I'll explain things as quickly as I can."

As he seated himself by her in the car he pulled out his watch and exclaimed, "I ought to be back there at the Juilliard now!"

Stephanie peered up into his face.

"Wizout me, you would not go back there?"

"Yes, without you, because you are to go on, you see."

"*Aber no!*" she cried, clutching his arm, "take me back wiz you. It is better I go wiz you. You can better explain and I have a fraid to go alone. Together we go back to the Juilliard, *Herr Vater*."

"Why do you always call me that? Is it what the German woman teaches you?" He looked at her moodily. "I see you're anxious to go back and that's natural under the circumstances. It's going to be hard for you, leaving your aunt and everything you've been accustomed to and going into a strange world. I'm sorry. I wish it didn't have to be. But we're in for it now. You must make the best of it. Be a brave girl and do exactly as I tell you for I have thought only of your best good,

Stephanie. I am your father, you know, and however hard it may be to leave your aunt and all the rest, you must trust me when I say it's best to follow my plans now. Do you think you can do that? Be a brave girl and listen quietly and do just what I tell you without making any fuss? Can you?"

Stephanie folded her hands in her lap and sat up straight with her eyes upon his face.

"Yes, *Herr Vater*."

It certainly was necessary to listen hard for she had not understood a thing so far. She didn't want to go back alone. Hannchen must have found out by this time about the white coat and would be furious. She would be cross too at Leona for taking her out alone and would tell Tante. Why had Leona done it and how came she herself here on a strange corner in a strange automobile, with her father on the seat beside her, if Coney Island had no connection with the matter? Her thoughts seemed to whirl. She forgot all the things she had been going to tell *Herr Vater* when they met.

The giant chauffeur occasionally passed where they could see him as he stepped around the front of the car, doing something to it with tools. All sorts of whistles and bells sounded and many people streamed in and out of the ferry entrance. The voice beside her talked on and on.

It was all about "Blue Heron" and "Miss Janet." Stephanie knew what Herren (gentlemen) were and blue ones must be policemen, but a Miss Janet seemed to be something different. Miss Janet would meet her somewhere, would tell her all she wanted to know, get anything she needed, take the place of all the persons who

usually cared for her. Gradually it dawned that he was handing her over to this stranger, and the thought made her deaf to all he said in Miss Janet's praise.

He now snapped open his watch again and said that as soon as he had talked with "that young man" he must hurry back to the Juilliard and face the music. (What music? Stephanie wondered, remembering that the piano had been sent away.)

"Is there any question you would like to ask me first?"

There were so many that they could not make room for each other to squeeze out.

"Is Miss Janet very wide?" she said at last. (She meant *far*, being always confused by the German word *weit*. This place might be as far away as Dresden itself.)

"No, she is decidedly slim," said Mr. Rand laughing. No wonder they did not understand each other!

"There's one thing will seem very strange to you, but I think it is best. You are to go by another name down there. You will not be called Stephanie Rand but must answer to some other name which Miss Janet will help you choose. She will explain and make you understand better than I can. And now I *must* get out and speak with your chauffeur."

They stood talking near the rear wheels and the passenger watched them but could hear little of what they said. She saw her father hold out something to the chauffeur.

"No, no," said that young man raising his voice and getting red in the face. "I don't want money. I'm doing this to please a woman—a woman that's been kind

to me. I've given you my word to take that little girl safely down to Miss Janet in Perth Amboy and both of 'em the rest of the way. If you've any doubt about anything, get somebody else, that's all."

Mr. Rand looked him in the eyes a moment, then his own face cleared and he held out his hand. After a second's hesitation the other shook it frankly.

They talked some minutes longer, sometimes motioning towards the watching passenger and sometimes bending together over a book with maps in it. Then once more Stephanie's father was on the seat beside her.

He looked her over critically. "Who dressed you in those clothes?"

She hung her head. "Please, Leona. But myself I think they look nice for Coney Island."

"Coney Island again!" he laughed. "You've never really been to Coney, have you?"

"Never once, *mein Vater*."

"Did you want to go?"

"Yes, *mein Vater*."

"Well, perhaps some day we'll try it together. But you're going some little distance farther now and it promises to be a cold, stormy trip. Miss Janet Price will meet you in an hour and she'll be stocked up with things to make you comfortable. But till then—— Here, I know what we can do. Stand up."

He stripped off his coat. It was a handsome garment of black cloth with fur collar and a thick fur lining. But the sleeves hung empty, way below Stephanie's hands, folds lay piled on her feet, and there was no way to fasten it around her.

Holding it together with one hand he glanced here and

there, lifted up the front seat and discovered there a piece of rope.

"That's more like!"

He wound the rope round and round her. Then she was so trussed up that he had to lift her into the seat where he crossed the coat over her feet and tucked a rug across her knees.

"Now you're fixed against the cold. Bet they never dressed you up like *this* at the Juilliard." He laughed gaily at her. She seemed to belong to him at that moment more than she ever had before. As for Stephanie, this young father in his dark suit with the big coat removed and his hat off seemed charming, debonair, and hard to be parted from so soon.

"I must be off. Now is there anything at all you want before I go?"

Stephanie pondered. Then she struggled to get her right hand free. The fingers of her left hand had never let go the little black book, her journal, which she had forgotten about but held unconsciously. He rolled back the deep cuff for her. Then she was overcome by a fit of shyness.

"What is it? What did you want to do?"

"It is nothings. Only long time I wish to stroke one small section of your hairs."

She reached up and gave his head one thistle-down touch with her gloved fingers.

He looked at her curiously, not understanding, wondering what was in her mind. He almost wished he could have planned to take her the whole way himself.

CHAPTER VI

DOWN THROUGH JERSEY

THROUGH the pine forests of eastern New Jersey an automobile raced at midnight. The trees, like Indian scouts, silent, gray, peering, stood at the dark roadside to see it pass and were caught there by the big headlights of the car. They, and a piece of yellow state-road shooting away beneath the wheels, were all that could be seen by those that sped southward this black night.

Plenty of noise there was. Above the swish and rumble of heavy wheels on gravel track sounded a north-east wind howling in the pine-tops.

The last lights had been two red eyes, winking at some lumber piles and a shed, near railroad tracks. The last human being had waved from an engine that seemed to spring on them out of the darkness, turning just in time to rumble away, drawing after it endless big square shapes that shouted "Clappity-clap, clappity-clap!" as they went by. The last place where people lived, barns, houses, yards, had been dark and still, except for a dog that woke and barked.

"Chauffeur!"

Three times had a small voice called, but the word was immediately swooped up by a great wind and carried off over bending pine-tops miles and miles and dropped into a pond back behind Lakewood somewhere. It never reached the driver. He sat motionless at his wheel, and

the solitary passenger in the rear seat—a slim passenger wrapped in a fur-lined coat, but in danger every minute of jolting out of it—subsided into a sort of trance on the edge of sleep, never able to tumble into its soft nest.

Long ago they had stopped at a red brick house with white stone window-sills and the giant chauffeur had brought her bread and milk. Long before that they had left behind them that city where they did *not* find Miss Janet.

Certainly the giant had expected to find her there in a big lighted building—a hotel. He came out looking anxious, even alarmed. He said Miss Janet had not come nor any message from her. They looked here and there; they drove to a railway station and waited till a train came roaring in and all the people had stepped down from it. The giant was nonplussed. He stood by the car and thought and frowned. Then he climbed into his place and said:

“Nothing for it but to go ahead without her.”

And this was long, long after they left New York streets, the ferry boat and the cobblestone square out of which *Herr Vater* had turned a corner and vanished from her sight.

On and on and on through villages and towns with long rows of signs along the road outside of them. “Stop Overnight at Bartlett Inn,” “Stop at Motor Inn,” “Polarine Oils and Greases,” “Call at Kenwood Garage.” But they stopped nowhere.

Then the woods began, and underneath them showed white sand and the road lay between yellow banks. At first they were a baby woods, little Christmas trees and

sometimes a house in a clear place. Then it was these grown-up woods, mile after mile after mile.

How it made one's eyes ache to watch the trees spring into the light and slip away. Stephanie shut them out for a minute and instead of trees they became strangely, pillows, unyielding, barky, and scratchy to her cheek. Or was it the big telephone book beneath her back? That is, her journal, which was humping itself around in the mattress, and Hannchen was angry; no, not Hannchen but a huge mysterious creature draped in blankets, in fact Miss Janet Price—

The car had stopped. R-r-rmp.

"Asleep?"

"No. Too much trees. Miss Janet Prices comes here to take my book."

She rubbed her eyes with one hand and felt for the journal with the other, realizing now that her hand was empty. The car was at a standstill, the chauffeur had turned in his seat, and she was talking nonsense.

"Cold?" he asked.

"A little."

"Hungry?"

"A little, yet."

"Wait."

He fumbled in his ulster pockets and produced a package.

"Got these put up at an owl wagon in Amboy thinking they might come in useful on the way. Egg sandwiches."

Stephanie caught one whiff and drew back.

"Please, no. I thank you. It is the onion. The smell is—how you say?—too numerous. I beg excuse from onions."

The chauffeur remained transfixed for a moment holding the parcel in the air. Then with a peculiar "Ha!" he leaned forward and pitched the sandwiches into the forest.

"I beg your pardon, Highness, but I'm not much used to the likes of you." He felt in another pocket. "Try this."

Again Stephanie drew back when she found he was holding out a bottle.

"I thank you. No."

"You must this time. It's milk with coffee in it. Swallow it right down."

"From bottles drink?"

"Sure. Put your lips right to the top."

Something in his tone made her obey. But it was a cold, nasty dose and some of it spilled down her neck.

"Next, to get warm."

He stepped out of the car and opened the door for her.

"Shake off that fur shell of yours and jump down here on the ground."

She was so stiff she could hardly stand and the wind took her breath away. But presently she was watching something that surely never happened before on that particular piece of state-road at 1.40 A.M. in a rising northeaster:—a giant giving a little girl lessons in squat-tag.

"We'll get out here in front of the lights. Now," he coaxed. "I'm it and you must run. Just to stretch your legs, that's all. Come on!"

But Stephanie only clung to the front wheel and looked at him with startled eyes.

"Don't tell me you don't know squat-tag? When I

go to touch you you must scrooch down like this. Then run! Scamper! Stretch your legs!"

He saw her lips move and bent to hear the words.

"I prefer they shall not."

"Shall not what?"

"Stretch."

"Ha!" cried the giant. "Listen, little Highness, you're stiff from this long cold trip. You've got to do something to limber up your joints, and tag is first rate for that. Don't you play tag at home?"

She shook her head.

"Time you learned then, sure thing. Now you're it. Try to touch me. See? I dast you. There!"

At last she was tempted into it. Then it was a sight to see the giant dodge and squat and skip, with coattails flying in the wind and benevolence beaming through his shell-rimmed glasses. A sight also the serious face of the small person in white imitating him.

She ran and puffed and almost sat down in the road, but her expression never changed, and when he forgot to squat and she bumped into him with a tiny squeal, she repressed it instantly, murmuring, "Please excuse."

"Smooth work! A girl that can swing in like that on a new game at two o'clock in the morning is going to make some fan. Now bundle into the big coat. So. And now sit down here a minute while we talk something over."

He lighted a lantern and seated himself beside her on the running-board of the car.

"You see it's like this:—I supposed my responsibilities, except just running this car down through Jersey, would be over when Miss Janet Price stepped in at

Amboy. But Miss Janet didn't step in and what's happened to the old girl I can't think. She gets flustered easily but generally manages to strike bed rock when any one's depending on her. Anyway some mistake was made and she's not here. I figured the only thing for me to do was to go on and get you to Blue Heron as quick as possible. I'm going to make it too. There's a nor'easter coming up but we'll beat it to the Cap'n's before daylight. But there's one thing we must settle on right now. What your father spoke about before he left. He said he'd told you. He said Miss Janet would help you choose. What handle will you go by down at Cap'n's?"

"Handle!"

Seeing her puckered forehead he explained again the curious thing she was sure she dreamed of first;—how, in this place where he was taking her, she would be Stephanie Rand no more, but another child who wasn't to mention Stephanie Rand or the Hotel Juilliard or anybody or anything she was used to there.

"Miss Janet isn't here and she won't be at the house. She's met with trouble and got side-tracked somewhere. So it's up to us to settle this thing once for all. I've been milling it over for the last four hours but—Hang it! I never named a girl. Miss Janet Price taught school once. But I—— Pshaw! Can't you name yourself?"

She stared at him, puzzling out his words.

"What person would you like best to be, besides yourself?" he put it.

Her face lit up. "Sadie Wienerwurst!" she cried.

"Sadie what? Did you make that name up?"

"No, please, a truly girl—one real girl, alive, has the name."

"Well, I'm glad she's alive and not in a sausage machine. Is she any relative of yours?"

"*Aber* no! No relations. She is my friend. A smart girl and of such good family. Her *Vater*, Mr. Wienerwurst, lives by her and has ways most agreeable. I like to be Sadie Wienerwurst. It is a nice name? Yes?"

"Sure! If it's the one you like, Highness, it will do fine for you. You're Sadie Wienerwurst—from Hoboken. Now suppose I was the Cap'n and I said, 'What's your name, little girl; and what quarter do you blow from?' What'd you say?" He helped her out, "'Sadie Wienerwurst,' you'd say, 'From Hoboken.' And it's the truth. From Hoboken we came this afternoon."

He stood up. "And now I'm going to fix things so you can maybe take a little nap before we get there."

With leather cushions and rugs he made a place on the floor between the seats for her to lie on, adjusted the big cloak, drew it snug, covered her with another robe and resumed his position at the wheel. The rest of the journey he himself rode on bare boards.

Just as he was ready to start he felt a slight poke.

"Yes, Highness, aren't you comfortable back there?"

"I had here a little book, a journal of my life. I feel after it everywhere but cannot find. When it gets lost I am so sad!"

"Well, we can't have you sad, Highness. But no use to look to-night. To-morrow I'll turn the car upside down and shake it."

Before he had time to release the clutch, he was poked again.

"Yes, Highness."

"You are a real chauffeur? Yes?"

"I've got a license."

"Is it then in that place where we go the function of chauffeurs to play squat?"

"Ha? Function?"

"Of the chauffeurs of that place of policemen? To play this game wiz girls which ride wiz them?"

"Function?" muttered Dan Smith. "Policemen? What's she givin' us?" He shook his head. "Why? Do you like squat-tag, Highness?"

"Ach, yes!"

"Well then, by hump! I'll see that the chauffeurs where we're going *make* it their what-you-call-'m. Now lie down and go to sleep, well as the roads and this jitney will let you."

He added to himself, "I'll be glad when the long bridge and Bog Island Bonnet are behind us."

As they spun away into the darkness he gave vent to one or two grim chuckles:

"Sadie Wienerwurst."

Stephanie sank into a sound sleep in her warm nest.

The giant was a reassuring person. One felt one could rely on him. The heavy rocking and the wind served to lull her now. She pressed her nose into the fur coat and sniffed at a suggestion of the heavenly-beautiful smell always associated with *Herr Vater's* presence. It sent her off to pleasant dreams.

Two hours must have passed but she thought it was a minute. Suddenly, with a great jolt, she was wakened,

and all sorts of uncomfortable things were happening at once.

Her bed was full of icy water and as she struggled out of it everything she touched felt soaked, and something else, fine and sharp, stung her face. A great thundering everywhere. Overhead a torn, gray sky, just visible. Was it morning then?

A lantern flashed across her face and she heard her new friend shout to persons unseen.

"Some gale, Cap'n Price! I had to make that run across the bridge close-hauled, so it rained right in. Tide's over the road some places. Bill Pharo, where's Miss Janet?"

"Somewhere's up the state, I reckon. Tellegraft came for Eller 'bout eleven o'clock. Said Miss Price requested Mrs. Pharo sit up fer autymobile. She could a got one more word in and told Eller what kep' her and who you was bringin' and what to do before you got here. But I expect Janet didn't make it up herself. She don't like to telegraft. What ails her anyway? Cap'n don't understand. Eller's had three letters off't her in two days, 'bout fixin' up the house. Yes, the tide's up some. Surf's washed out the upper end of Montague. They say the railroad bridge may go."

"If it does the long bridge goes with it. That's why I'm in a hurry. Me for the back trail before the road's cut off."

"What! Not going back to-night!"

"Sure am."

"How you goin'?"

"In this jitney. She's a good traveler. The boss expects me in town to-morrow at ten-thirty. He's got a

new bunch of gravel-mixers to send down. By the way, does Boxer know I was expected? I sent word not to tell him."

"No, we didn't know ourselves that 'twas an auto druv by *you*."

"That's good. He'd only worry. You say Mrs. Bill's in there? This child's wet and cold and tired to death."

"What name did y'say, Dan? Name of the child?"

"Wienerwurst. Sadie Wienerwurst from Hoboken."

The top of the car had been let down to make a better run across the bridge. Now Stephanie's giant freed her from wet rugs and raised her to his shoulder.

Over his shoulder she caught a first impression in the murky dawn. Nothing in sight but sky and water and a few bushes whipping with the gale. Thunderous crashing sounded, out there toward the sky.

"Where are those blue *Herren*?" she quavered in the giant's ear. "I think we better gone to Coney anyway."

CHAPTER VII

SADIE WIENERWURST

CAPTAIN AARON PRICE sat by the stove in his room, which opened from the kitchen, and pored over a newspaper. It was several days old and he had read it through twice before, but having forgotten those times he was now as much concerned as ever over a fire on the Philadelphia docks.

A forty-mile gale from far up on the northern Atlantic tore across Blue Heron Island and shook the old house like a rag as it went by. But this did not disturb the Cap'n, nor did the mighty surf pounding on the beach, nor the rain and sand pelting against the window panes. Northeast storms in March were what Cap'n Price expected. What did bother him was Mrs. Bill Pharo in the kitchen getting supper. He couldn't quite make out why she was there instead of his daughter, though everything had been several times explained.

He was annoyed too by the repeated banging open of doors to the storm caused by a boy in an oilskin suit and sou'wester.

"Shut that door, Rawger, don't you know better'n to open a door to leeward in this here gale? There! The papers on my desk are carried off and it'll take me all evening to brace 'em up again."

"Excuse *me*, Cap'n, I'm awfully sorry about the papers, but I came in to tell you something you really

ought to know. There's somebody upstairs in the old kitchen!"

Mrs. Bill made signs to Roger. "It's that girl."

"What girl?"

"A girl that come last night."

"Came last night! Why, the bridge is out!"

"Well, she got across from the Main in a auto." Mrs. Pharo hurried on before Roger could ask what auto and who drove it. "If you hadn't been out sloshin' round the village all day you'd a known about her. What you say ails her now?"

"I don't know. She's awfully still. I went up after my boots and I heard a little sort of creeping noise. Thought 'twas rats at first. It's queer for a girl to keep so still."

"Well, why don't she get dressed and come down then? My instructions was to let her sleep and I done so, till three o'clock this afternoon. Then I went up and took her dress which had got dry by the kitchen stove, and a cup of coffee. I ast her how she felt and how she enjoyed her trip and how she left her folks, and I ast her how come she to wear them white clothes down here in such a storm, and I ast her if she'd know'd Miss Janet Price very long and whether Hoboken was a pleasant place to live and I ast her if her pa and ma was well. 'N all the time she jest set up in bed with her eyes rolling round and never spoke a word. She seemed to be listenin' to the surf. So I started to hand her the coffee and all 'f sudden she let out some kind of lingo at me and dove down into the bedclothes. She hauled the comfort up around her ears and just shuck her head and squeezed her eyes shut and I thought she wanted to

sleep some more, so I told her supper would be ready about six, and I set the coffee down and come away. I don't know what to make of her, and Cap'n, course, don't sense a thing, but it don't seem natural the way she acts. I think myself she's fori'n. S'pose you go up now and rap on the door, Rawger, and tell her supper's on. Ask her if she wants something to put round her. I can't leave this chowder. Besides, I hate them outside stairs a night like this."

Because this lower floor had once been Cap'n Price's store and the upper floor his house, the only stairs were outdoors, slanting up against the south wall. There were verandas over them, but in a storm like this you needed a waterproof and hood and boots, all securely lashed, to go upstairs. Roger was in his oilskins.

There was not even a creeping noise in the room now. Only a sound of hard breathing, as if some one worked laboriously at something. Roger could hear it plainly because it was close to the door and he had drawn near on tip-toe. At his loud rap it stopped.

"Who is there?" asked a small voice.

"It's me—that is, I'm Roger Smith, a boy that stays here. I came to say that supper's nearly ready."

"Supper?"

"Yes, downstairs. There's clam chowder. Don't you want any?"

A pause. "Please send me cocoa and a plenty toast. Send them upstairs on me. I eat the meals always upstairs in my room. And please, where *is* the telephone?"

"Telephone! There isn't any except at the hotel and Bissell's store."

"No telephone?"

"No."

"No telephone in *this* hotel?"

"Not so you'd notice it."

"Ach! You please send then a chambermaid to me, or a housekeeper, or—or yet the thick one, which was here this afternoon. But she could ask fewer questions."

Roger stared at the doorknob. "I don't understand exactly. There's no chambermaid here, nobody but Mrs. Bill, the Life Saving Station's wife, I mean Cap'n Bill Pharo's, of course. And she's making the chowder and can't leave it. Why don't you come down?"

"How shall I come down? I haf already try. I find no elevator only a fire-escape. And I don't like the great wind and the noise. I don't like to go on fire-escapes in storms. And—I have got other troubles——"

"What did you say?"

The voice inside trembled. "The shoe-button. I am not accustomed. I tire myself much, but he remains unbuttoned. I have never any experience of b-b-b-buttons. I like a maid quick to help."

Roger drew off slowly. It was a case for Mrs. Pharo or nobody. Besides he was afraid he would laugh.

As he retreated the door opened and the voice which, though so small and plaintive, sounded as if it were used to giving orders, said:

"Boy!"

"Hn? Oh—yes?"

"A pitcher ice-water you could anyway bring."

Roger flew down to the kitchen and almost left the entry door open again in his hurry to sink into the splint-bottom rocking-chair and gasp.

"You better go right up, Mrs. Pharo. Take the ele-

vator and a pitcher of ice-water and telephone for a taxi-cab. Who is that girl anyway? She's *Dutch!*"

"I don't know no more'n you do. Her name's Sadie Wienerwurst from Hoboken. You get Cap'n to his supper and in a minute I'll step upstairs."

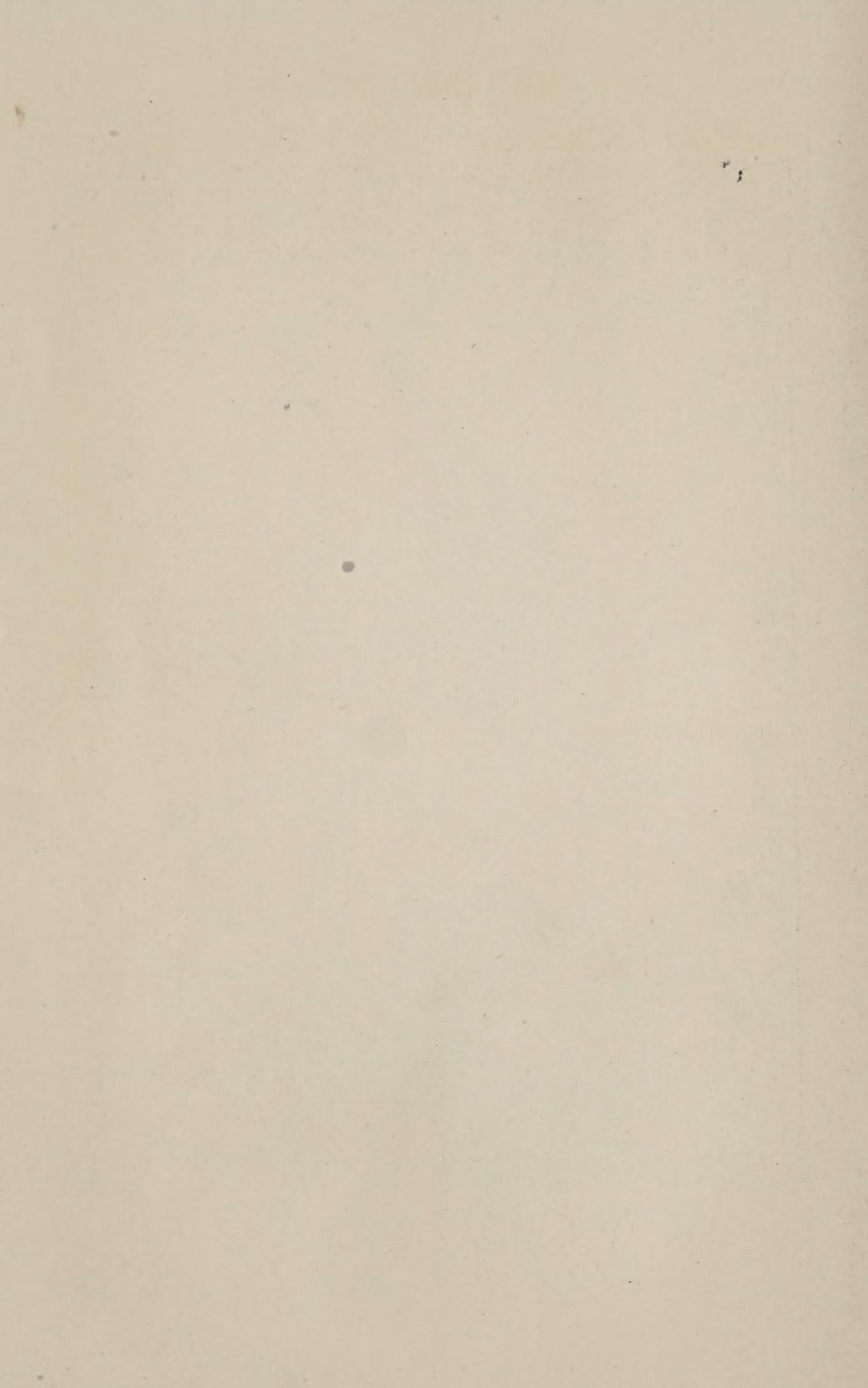
To herself Mrs. Pharo grumbled, "Must be sump'n queer about the girl. Dan wants Roger not to know he brung her down and Janet writes three letters in one day 'bout the south chamber and the best sheets but don't tell a word 'bout the party that's comin'. Thinks I, it's Mis' Piffin'ton. And there, 'twas only this girl. South chamber! Nobody can't set up stoves in a nor'easter. Janet never had no one in March before but gunners. Janet's a good neighbor. I just as lieves get meals. But if I tromp up and down them stairs in this gale I'll be clean drug out. If I was Janet I'd build this house over, father or no father."

While she was putting on the supper and the Captain and Roger seated themselves at table, the door of the entry was heard banging, then the kitchen door flew open, and there on the threshold stood the new boarder. Mrs. Pharo jumped to shield the lamp, Roger to shut the doors. The Captain turned and adjusted his spectacles. All three stared at what the wind had tossed in amongst them.

She might almost have come riding on a broomstick or on a clot of foam or some flying seaweed, for her big frightened eyes and her matted curls made her look like a little hobgoblin. The white cloth frock was all wrinkled and it had a strange, skewed appearance as though hooks were fastened to wrong eyes in the back. The white satin sash that should have looped at the side was pulled



"Why, child, you're all wet!"



around and fastened in a hard knot. Her arms were bare; so were her knees; she had on the clothes that had been laid out to go down to dinner in at the Juilliard. One white boot held together by a single button at the top. The other gaped wide apart.

"Why, child, you're all wet!" exclaimed Mrs. Pharo.

"By fire-escape I come," she answered with a wild gesture.

Her most terrible nightmare had come true. A dream she had had, ever so often, since as far back as she could remember:—that she was on the narrow iron stairs that zigzagged outside the hotel wall, all alone in the dark, going down and down. Then Hannchen would hear her scream and would come and say:

"It is something you have eaten. In the morning Fräulein shall give you castor oil."

But this had been real. She had felt her way down in pitchy blackness that crashed and roared. She had not known what was at the foot and only by chance had laid hold of a doorknob and found her way in here.

And what was this? A servant's dining-room? She suddenly realized that she was very hungry.

"Please," she said, coming two steps into the room.
"Please, where is dinner served?"

"What, ma'am?" asked the Captain, who was nearest her.

"Where is the dining-room? I send for a chamber-maid but none comes and I dress myself and climb down off fire-escapes. I don't know the way here. I like some one direct me on the public dining-room."

"This is where we eat at present, ma'am," said Cap'n Price. "In summer I allow my daughter to set tables

for boarders in the store, but it's a temp'ry arrangement—purely temp'ry—as soon as I get a full-rigged business launched again we'll get rid of all such nonsense. You see, it's like this——”

“Never mind, Cap'n,” interrupted Mrs. Pharo. “'Nuther time will do to explain that. We near about give you out, child. I'm afraid your clothes took some damage coming down them outside stairs. Set right up to table. Janet has 'em eat here except in the boardin' season. Roger and his brother they don't count as boarders. They're like as if they lived to Blue Heron and you'll have to be the same, I guess, you came so early. Cap'n this here is Sadie Wienerwurst, the first boarder of the season. Sadie, make you 'quainted with Cap'n Price and with Roger Smith, who went up to call you just now. If you're fond of book-knowledge him and you ought to get on good together. Set right down here side of him.”

Stephanie, with her eyes as big as saucers, took the offered seat between the bell-boy and the strange old man. But surely no bell-boy ever existed without brass buttons and as for her other neighbor he was a handsome old man with a hook nose and bright blue eyes. She wondered if she should have curtsied to him.

The table had a red cloth on it and was near enough to the stove for Mrs. Pharo to pour out tea and set the pot back on the hob without rising.

Now whether it was their calling her a boarder, or her unexpected entrance, or her name, anyhow Cap'n Price became sadly mixed about the lady at his right.

After pushing his glasses back securely on his nose and taking a long look at her he asked:

"What did you say your name is, ma'am?"

"Steph—no—that is—Sadie Wienerwurst from Hoboken." This was said so confusedly that Cap'n Price put his hand up behind his ear.

"What say, ma'am?"

"Sadie Wienerwurst."

The Captain looked around as though somebody had been neglectful. "Roger, I don't know as you been made acquainted with this lady, Mrs. Winterwurts."

"Wienerwurst," corrected Mrs. Pharo. "I just made her 'quainted with Roger."

"I don't recollect seeing you before, Mrs. Wizzlehurst. Did you come down by boat or train? You bean't from Mt. Holly, be you? There's a lady from there been comin' here for quite a spell, name of Higinbotham. Maybe you're some relation of her'n?"

"Sakes alive, Cap'n, what notions you dew take! Mis' Higinbotham hain't been to Janet's in fifteen year, and anyway this little girl's no relation to them. She's from Hoboken."

"Hoboken, hey? I used to know a sight of folks from there when I run the *Lizzie M.* I used to dock her there. That was before I run aground o' trouble——" And the Captain launched into a long account of things that had happened many years ago—ships, storms, his wife, "Janey," a store, trouble, enemies. All of it was told to Stephanie as if she were a grown-up lady, and he addressed her severally as Mrs. Wimmenwurst, Mrs. Wheezleworks, and Mrs. Weatherburst.

Poor Stephanie didn't know where to look. She glanced at the bell-boy and was surprised at the color of his face. It was purple, and he seemed to be choking.

At "Weatherburst" he rolled his eyes toward her and stuffed his napkin into his mouth.

She began to wonder who she really was. She had been Stephanie Rand no longer ago than yesterday morning, and now was Sadie Wienerwurst, not gay Sadie of Central Park, but an uncombed, unwashed, imperfectly buttoned child who ate from a thick white plate and had her soup poured from a black pan on the stove.

Could she be also one of the unknown ladies the old man took her for?

However, she was very hungry and ate all the supper that was offered her.

"Now, Cap'n," said Mrs. Pharo rising, "you can tell Sadie that some other time. I got to clear up and get home to *him*. Roger, you take Sadie upstairs and make a light in the settin'-room and show her shells out the cabinet, or somethin', till I'm done here. I got together some things for you, Sadie, seein's your trunk ain't come. Wrap this coat of Cap'n's round you to go up them stairs."

Stephanie wondered where *Herr Vater's* coat was. This one smelled queer. But there was no time to think about it; the boy raced upstairs so fast that it was hard work to keep up with him and she didn't propose to be left far behind.

From the upper hall he ushered her into a chilly room and lighted a lamp on the center-table.

"Sit down and make yourself easy. That's the shell cabinet over there if you want to look in it. My brother caught the shark that big tooth came from."

The speaker plumped himself down on a sofa.

Stephanie took a chair on the opposite side of the room, still enveloped in Cap'n Price's old pea-jacket over her short frock. The boy wore shell-rimmed glasses. They stared solemnly at each other, both bursting with questions which they didn't know if it would be proper to ask.

"*Why don't you button up your shoes?*" exclaimed Roger at last, unable to hold his curiosity any longer.

"Please, I have no buttonhook."

"Can't you do it with your fingers?"

"Please, I don't know how wiz fingers. I have from buttons no experience. My maid does it for me. Where is one here which shall dress me and bring new clothes and fill the bath? I search and again search for telephone but my room has not a bell even, but only a large round hole very high upon the wall."

"Ho! That's the stove-pipe hole into our room. Your room's the old kitchen, you know."

"A kitchen?"

"Yes. You see it's this way:—Downstairs used to be a store. 'Price's General Store and Market,' it says over the front door yet. This room's their parlor yet, except when Miss Janet gets full up with boarders. Your room used to be the kitchen. It's over the downstairs kitchen and I guess Mrs. Bill put you in there cause 'twas warm. Didn't you notice all the cupboards and the sink?"

"Much cupboard truly. A sink I have never seen. A kitchen! So? I am almost never in any kitchen before and had not known this custom that persons sleep in them."

"Never in a kitchen! Whee-yew! Where do you

come from anyway? Oh, yes, you said Hoboken. Don't they have any kitchens in Hoboken?"

"Please, I don't know."

Roger stared harder than ever. "Are you a foreigner?"

"No, certainly! I am American. I spik good English, yes?"

"Excuse me, but you certainly don't. You talk about like one of my brother's dagos, that mix cement and tote gravel, you know. My brother's away, gone up to town to get a new bunch of men. Wish he'd hurry back. My brother's a dandy; everybody likes him. He loves a nor'easter. He's been out in the surf-boat lots of times and only this winter helped get men in from a wreck, the *Stephen B. Culmore*. I wasn't here then, worse luck, but up in town in school."

Stephanie was turning things over in her mind but didn't know how to find out what she wanted to know. There were so many things she was not accustomed to—boys, for one, and places like this, and asking questions of strangers.

She summoned up her courage and said: "You wear no uniform?"

"Uniform! Why should I? I don't go to a military school."

"But," she stammered. "I—I think you are call-boy here."

"What? a bell-boy?" Roger threw up his hands and shouted. "So that's why you tried to work me for a pitcher of ice-water? Ho! Won't my brother laugh at that! You see he and I board here at Price's. At least he does and Morwood let me come this spring because my

eyes are bad, and besides, my brother wanted me. Why, you must take this for the Bellevue-Stratford! It's only a small boarding-house Miss Janet runs ever since Cap'n had his money swiped and all the rest that happened to him. Blue Heron's hardly on the map, you know. Doesn't boast such an institution as a first-class hotel." (Every once in a while Stephanie's companion used big words like these.)

Blue *Herren* again!—"Where *are* those policemen?"

"Policemen? There aren't any of them, either."

"But what you mean then as you say 'Blue Herren'?" (*Herren* means in German "gentlemen" and policemen were blue *Herren* whom Stephanie had seen every day of her city life.)

Roger looked blank. "Blue Heron? Why, Blue Heron's the name of this place. Named after the bird, I s'pose, that stands on one leg out in the meadows. You see 'em once in a long time now. Policemen?" He wondered if the strange girl were not a little wrong in her mind perhaps. Like Cap'n. But the thought of Cap'n reminded him of the supper-table and at this he was suddenly taken with what appeared to Stephanie some serious disorder.

"Oh, my! Oh, ho, ho! 'Mrs. Weatherburst!' There you sat looking as if you'd been blowing around the beach for a week and Cap'n every other minute addressin' you as 'Mrs. Weatherburst.' Oh, ho! hi!" Roger threw himself back on the sofa in an ecstasy. "Oh, how I wish my brother had been there!"

Roger laughed his laugh out. Then he opened his eyes and the first thing he saw was his companion's face. It wore a queer expression, as if she would politely laugh

too but couldn't quite pull it off. The corners of her mouth went down instead, her face began to work, and she dropped her chin and gave a big sniff between the lapels of Cap'n's coat. Roger could see she hadn't meant to do it—she wasn't a cry-baby.

"Oh, say!" He sat up with a jerk. "I didn't mean—"

She crooked one great woolen sleeve forlornly over her face.

Roger thought of several things but chiefly of his big brother. His brother, who never had been to school much or had advantages himself but who set a very high standard in the matter of being "decent" and "courteous"; his brother, who was probably the hugest man in Jersey and at the same time the gentlest to small creatures. He remembered also that this queer little Sadie was a stranger.

What could he do to cheer her up? He thought of something but hesitated because it was his cherished secret and pet project. Was it a thing you could let a girl into? But she was such a doleful object, she certainly needed something thoroughly interesting to think about.

He dashed out and into his room across the hall, then back again with an armful of books.

"Here, don't cry any more but read these and look at the pictures and you'll have something to take up your attention. And looka' here—these aren't the real thing, the most interesting part. There's a secret too, something I've studied out myself and I'm dead sure I'm on a trail nobody ever struck before. If you like the books I'll let you in on it. Nobody else knows, even my

brother. He'd laugh; he's grown up and in business and makes fun of what I get out of books. He doesn't realize it's going to benefit him most of all if I'm right. Would you like to be in on this and help me ferret out an extremely thrilling secret?"

Stephanie drew the backs of both hands down over her eyes and peeked sideways at the books. She didn't know what he was talking about but understood that he meant to please her.

"Take 'em to your room and read 'em to-morrow."

He piled them in her lap and she said, "I thank you," and added shyly, "Please excuse the crying."

She began turning the books over and spelling out their titles:

The Black Avenger of the Spanish Main.

The Pirate Smugglers.

The Freebooter, or the Scourge of the Caribbean Sea.

The Pirates' Own Book.

"I recommend that last one the very highest of all," declared Roger.

CHAPTER VIII

PIRATES

WHEN Mrs. Pharo came upstairs and called Stephanie, Roger politely carried the books into her room and stopped to explain things:

"That iron shelf with your washbowl and pitcher and soap in it is the old sink. Under here I guess they used to keep frying-pans, and all those cupboards and drawers were for knives and coffee-pots and pepper and everything else that belongs in kitchens. There's your friend, the stove-pipe hole. If you fired a paper-wad through it 'twould land right on my brother's bed. Well, good-night, Sadie. See you later about you know what."

"Good-night," said Stephanie as soon as she realized that "Sadie" meant herself. "You shall sleep well, I hope."

"Sure to," Roger declared.

He went downstairs and told Cap'n Price that that new girl was the po-lit-est kid.

"She says please or thank you or Happy New Year or sump'm every time she opens her mouth."

"Who does that 'ere?" asked Cap'n.

He was a hard person to tell things to, for he wanted every little point explained and the next minute had forgotten the whole affair.

"Sadie."

"Sadie who?"

"Sadie Wienerwurst."

"I don't know her," said the Cap'n blankly.

Mrs. Bill Pharo laid out a comb and brush, a pin-cushion and a buttonhook on a shelf over the frying-pan cupboard and placed a toothbrush in a glass tumbler in the sink.

"There. Now I guess you're provided for. The pin-cushion and comb was in the south chamber and that toothbrush was in a washstand drawer and I can't see as it's a bit wore. I'll look up an old pair of black stockin's of my grown-up daughter's. What happened—did your ma get your summer and winter things mixed up or did you put on them short stockin's yourself?"

The new boarder shook her head. She was sitting in the rocking-chair looking on while her bed was made, her coat and hat hung up and the big woolly nightgown she had worn to bed laid out. Mrs. Pharo was a stout person who always rested one hand, palm upward, across the front of her waist when she stopped to talk. It was hard for her to bend over.

"You ought not to throw your best coat down that way. What with the ride and the wettin', it's took considerable damage and 'twas a handsome piece of goods. How much is that silk worth a yard in Hoboken?"

The new boarder shook her head.

"Well, of course you wouldn't know if 'twas bought for you by some of your folks. They're real well off, ain't they?"

The new boarder shook her head.

"Oh, they ain't? Well, I wondered how you happened to come down dressed so scanty and not even a hand-bag. But you got a trunk comin', of course?"

The new boarder shook her head.

"What, no trunk! Well, Janet's got some fixin' out to do. But then, she's good-hearted. I s'pose you think the world of Miss Janet Price?"

The new boarder shook her head.

"You don't like Miss Janet?"

The new boarder shook her head.

"Well, you'd ought to."

The questioner was shocked into a few moments' silence. She had set the room to rights and stood looking around to see if everything was done so that she could leave. Stephanie thought this meant that Mrs. Pharo was ready at last to wait on her. She held out her left hand.

"Please, this first," she said. Mrs. Pharo looked at the hand. "What's the matter with it?"

"Please, the manicure? I am now two days without and look only, how it is necessary!"

"Rheumatism, did you say?"

"No, please, the manicure."

Mrs. Pharo shook *her* head. "You'll have to go somewhere else for that. They don't give any kind of cures here—rubbing and that. It's as much as Miss Janet can do to feed 'em and keep the house runnin'. Of course Mis' Piffin'ton gets relief here from hay fever durin' July and August but that's only the sea air. She and the lady from Philadelphia up and packs their trunks soon's the golden-rod blooms and by that time Janet, she's glad to see 'em go. If you wanted to take a cure you ought to gone to Asb'ry Park or Atlantic City where they do all them fancy tricks. But if your folks ain't well off, why I s'pose they had to pick out a small place like Blue

Heron. Well, I guess everything's fixed. It may soak in a little round them winders but 'twon't dround you, I guess. How loud the surf sounds in this nor'east room! It's been poundin' at the sandhills not more'n forty foot from our house, and Swaller Bay's backed right up into the barn. Well, good-night, Sadie. Hope you don't suffer much in your hand, whatever's the matter of it."

As Mrs. Pharo closed the door perhaps it occurred to her that it was a very small boarder who sat there staring after her with big eyes, for she put her head in again to say:

"Now, don't you get nervous, child. Cap'n's almost under you and Roger right next door. Janet'll be here soon as the trains run. Well, I wish you a good rest. If you was as drug out as I be you'd need it."

Mrs. Pharo could be heard lumbering away and opening the hall door, as she went out, to a shrieking gust of wind. If her thoughts had not been taken up with the bother of getting home in rubber boots, and carrying a lantern across the tracks and the flooded meadows, she might have been more sympathetic. She wanted to oblige "Price's," for Janet had helped her out many a time, but when she agreed to look after Cap'n Price for a day while Janet went up to town she certainly hadn't bargained on a three-day nor'easter and a strange girl upstairs.

Stephanie heard the outside door shut and then could hear nothing more except the storm. How the house shook! The wind seemed to pant against it. That afternoon she had seen through her blurred window what made the great crash and roar—again, and again,

and again. Out on the edge of the world, beyond a few little perched-up houses, fierce gray crests reared themselves, broke, and tossed spray twenty feet in air. That was the ocean. Not the pretty blue ocean she had seen on fine days at Magnolia and Narragansett but the kind they had here in this lonely place.

That woman had gone away. But surely some one else would come soon to tend to her. She had had, all day, no bath. There was a bathroom with tub and faucets next this room but she couldn't turn on the water in the bath; she had tried this afternoon. Her face even was not clean; it felt sticky. Her finger-nails had never been like this before. She needed slippers and a kimono and a handkerchief. She needed a carafe of cold water and a little glass beside her bed. She needed some little tablets, pink ones and brown ones, in case she coughed in the night. Who would brush her hair? Where were the fresh clothes to put on in the morning? She could not go downstairs again in these.

Wondering and waiting she sat quiet a long time. It was so strange here. Could it be possible that she had been brought to the wrong place? The big chauffeur hadn't meant to, of course. He was a kind giant. But perhaps he had misunderstood the directions and brought her to some other place which had, to be sure, a Miss Janet, but a Miss Janet that was away mostly.

This made her feel like crying again. At the Juilliard one couldn't laugh or cry without annoying Tante. She remembered once long ago she had made a terrible crying and kicked the wall and broken a vase—something about *Herr Vater*, she had forgotten what. She never did it again. But for some reason she felt just like that now.

Then the outside hall door was opened again and somebody began clumping around the next room, whistling.

"That boy," whispered Stephanie, and it seemed less lonesome.

When quiet had settled down in his room she knew it must be very late. She unfastened the clothes it had been such a labor to put on and in the large, striped, woolly nightgown crept to bed. She didn't know how you switched off glass lamps like the one the woman had left on her shelf, so it kept on burning through the night.

The last thing she thought of was her journal. The giant had promised to find it. Why didn't he bring it to her? Where had he vanished indeed? She had looked out of the window for him this afternoon thinking so large a person would be easy to discover in this flat place, but nothing had been visible except the little shut-up houses and the storm.

During the night the heavy northeast gale, which in forty-eight hours had contrived to alter the Jersey coastline and skew up several sections of the Pennsylvania Railroad, wore itself out at last. By early morning Cap'n Price discovered that the wind had shifted to north'ard and the storm was over.

Jake Headly of the life-saving crew stopped at the door to say that Hosy Tonkins' house had been turned over and stood on end and they wanted help to set it straight again.

"Gales like this 'ere occurs only when the moon is in pogy," asserted Jake, who had been studying an almanac.

"Pogy!" ejaculated Cap'n Price. "I never hearda that quarter. This time of year it awliz gets round to naw'east and blows like a streak of gimblets."

Stephanie slept heavily in the close room. She woke at last with a start and called out:

"Hannchen!"

Then she realized where she was.

Beside her room at the Juilliard with its brocade and mahogany, the rooms she had waked up in before belonged to luxurious hotels at certain expensive resorts. Thither each summer, while Aunt Katherine toured or visited, and sometimes also in the winter, her Fräulein took her. There the days passed in a round of driving or walking at appointed hours, dressing, shampooing, massage, napping, eating, and for hours sitting waiting in pergolas, courts and verandas where the Fräuleins and nurses came to gossip.

There the bedrooms were much alike. They had tinted walls, wicker or painted furniture, much chintz, a large bathroom, and on the wall a telephone into which Fräulein had only to murmur what they wanted and behold, it was immediately at the door.

In this room there was not a single object Stephanie was used to except herself and a little heap of clothing on a rocking-chair.

The walls were boarded part way up and painted brown. Two or three odd pieces of carpet on the floor served as rugs. Over the window, which was divided into twelve little panes, some old gray net was fastened. The air was close with musty odors which Stephanie did not recognize, of old straw mattress, fried fish of the past, and the lamp which had burned itself out in the night.

"This is perhaps the accustomed smell of kitchens," thought Stephanie. The smell was obnoxious, her bed

hard and lumpy, the outlook from her window gray. But she liked the kitchen arrangements. She decided that if nobody came and she had to stay here in this room she could at least look in all the cupboards and pretend that they contained the things she wanted.

She had hardly ever "pretended" at the Juilliard. There was always somebody looking. Never in her life before had she been left so long alone as yesterday and this morning. Even her one great affection had been stifled and told to nobody but a little book with imitation-leather covers.

Nobody came. There was less noise outside this morning and not a sound within the house. The truth was that Mrs. Pharo lay in bed at home with lumbago, brought on by her neighborly exertions. Cap'n Price and Roger had eaten breakfast and gone to Hosy Tonkins' where all the village was helping to set his house right side up. Stephanie had slept late. It was now the middle of the morning.

She lowered her feet to the floor, then drew back with an "Ach!" and brushed off some particles of sand. At length on her tip-toes she gingerly picked her way around the room.

She opened all the doors and presses.

"In here are plates of toast and butter," she told herself in her accustomed tongue. "Many little silver plates with pieces of butter on them. And in this are *omelettes aux truffe* and hot cocoa and hot muffins. And here a shelf full of orange marmalade. And this—" But this cupboard was not entirely empty for here Mrs. Pharo had laid the books of that boy. Stephanie had forgotten about them.

"So—he laughs because I blunder but later he is sorry and explains and presents books."

She read again the titles.

"Pirates. They are the pretty talking birds." She was thinking of parrots seen in the Bronx Park zoo.

"Here is amusement for me. Fräulein doesn't know how I can read the English books. I could read all those in Tante's sitting-room if they would let me. But there are never any nice books in my school-room, only the stupid Schiller and Heine."

She carried Roger's books to the bed and arranged herself to read.

Her first glance through these volumes startled her. Pirates were not birds, it seemed, but ugly men in ships or by the seashore. *The Pirates' Own Book* had most pictures and worse ones, so she went back to that. It fell open in her hands at a terrible scene, *The Pirates Pelting Cap'n Skinner with Glass Bottles*.

These were curious old books indeed that Roger had picked out to cheer her up. He had found them tucked away at the back in a corner cupboard in Cap'n Price's room. It was on his first vacation spent here that he discovered them and after that, he ate, drank, breathed, and dreamed—pirates.

They were bound in brown leather which was crumbling off, and they smelled musty, and the illustrations were hideous woodcuts.

Stephanie held *The Pirates' Own Book* on her knees and bent over the picture of the unfortunate Cap'n Skinner.

Once, while they were passing in the limousine, two men in an excavation, whom Fräulein called Italian day-

laborers, had been shouting and trying to hit each other with pickaxes and there was a great crowd and a policeman had come running. It was the only scene of violence she had ever looked at.

"Ach!" she whispered to the old picture. "Such shocking day-laborers!"

For one of them was tied with ropes and two others with fierce faces were waving huge black bottles and had smashed one against his head so that he fell down with his mouth wide open. It was the most frightful picture Stephanie had ever seen. The German classics had not hinted at such doings.

She turned over the pages. *The Pirates striking off the arm of Captain Babcock.* *Captain Kidd hanging in Chains.* *The Pirates fire into Lieut. Kearney's boat while reconnoitering the shore.* *Blackbeard's Head on the End of the Bowsprit.*

Then she found the very first page and began to read:

"In the mind of the mariner there is a superstitious horror connected with the name of Pirate; and there are few subjects that interest and excite the curiosity of mankind generally, more than the desperate exploits, foul doings, and diabolical career of these monsters in human form. A piratical crew is generally formed of the desperadoes and runagates of every clime and nation. The pirate, from the perilous nature of his occupation, when not cruising on the ocean, the great highway of nations, selects the most lonely isle of the sea for his retreat, or secretes himself near the shores of rivers, bays, and lagoons of thickly-wooded and uninhabited countries, so that if pursued he can escape to the woods and mountain glens of the interior. The islands of the Indian Ocean,

and the east and west coasts of Africa as well as the West Indies, have been their haunts for centuries; and vessels navigating the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, are often captured by them, the passengers and crew murdered, the money and most valuable part of the cargo plundered, the vessel destroyed, thus obliterating all trace of their unhappy fate, and leaving friends and relatives to mourn their loss from the inclemencies of the elements, when they were butchered in cold blood by their fellow-men, who by practically adopting the maxim that 'dead men tell no tales,' enable themselves to pursue their diabolical career with impunity. The pirate . . . when not engaged in robbing . . . passes his time singing old songs with choruses like:

" ' Drain, drain the bowl, each fearless soul,
Let the world wag as it will;
Let the heavens growl, let the devil howl,
Drain, drain the deep bowl and fill.'

" Thus his hours of relaxation are passed in wild and extravagant frolics amongst the lofty forests of palms and spicy groves of the Torrid Zone, and amidst the aromatic and beautiful flowering vegetable productions of that region. He has fruits delicious to the taste. It would be supposed that his wild career would be one of delight.

" But the apprehension and foreboding of the mind, when under the influence of remorse, are powerful, and every man, whether civilized or savage, has interwoven in his constitution a moral sense, which secretly condemns him when he has committed an atrocious action, even

when he is placed in situations which raise him above the fear of human punishment for:

“ ‘Conscience the torturer of the soul, unseen,
Does fiercely brandish a sharp scourge within;
Severe decrees may keep our tongues in awe,
But to our minds what edicts can give law?
Even you yourself to your own breast shall tell
Your crimes, and your own conscience be your hell.’

“ With the name of pirate is also associated the idea of rich plunder, caskets of jewels, chests of gold ingots, bags of outlandish coins, secreted in lonely out-of-the-way places, or buried about the wild shores of rivers, and unexplored sea coasts, near rocks and trees bearing mysterious marks, indicating where the treasure was hid. And as it is his invariable practice to secrete and bury his booty, and from the perilous life he leads, being often killed or captured, he can never re-visit the spot again; immense sums remain buried in those places, and are irrevocably lost. Search is often made by persons who labor in anticipation of throwing up with their spade and pickax gold bars, diamond crosses, sparkling amongst the dirt, bags of golden doubloons and chests, wedged close with moidores, ducats, and pearls; but though great treasures be hid in this way it seldom happens that any is so recovered.”

This was the preface, with a picture of a bearded creature like a baboon with a little boy's hat on its head.

“ I don't like pirates! ” cried Stephanie in German, pushing the book away from her and looking round with a shudder.

The house seemed strangely empty. No footsteps or voices could be heard, but there were a thousand noises made by the wind. If you listened these began to sound like persons tip-toeing, tapping, prying at cracks. Where were the people she had seen last night? One of them was called "Captain" and were not these pictures all of captains? If she read carefully she might find something about Captain Price. Perhaps *he* was a pirate.

All the long afternoon the wind, growing less, still kept up its worrying round the empty house; the surf boomed and gray scud raced across the section of sky visible from Stephanie's window. She had finally emptied the cup of cold coffee left on a shelf the afternoon before by Mrs. Pharo. It gave her strength to puzzle over the hard English words and guess at those she didn't understand. Still she read on, now and then glancing round to listen, with her doubled fist pressed against her lips.

"Among the distinguished individuals who lurked about the colonies was Captain Robert Kidd, who in the beginning of King William's war commanded a privateer in the West Indies. . . . He had now become notorious as a nondescript animal of the ocean. He was somewhat of a trader, something more of a smuggler, but mostly a pirate. He had traded many years among the pirates, in a little rakish vessel, that could run into all kinds of water. He knew all their haunts and lurking places and was always hooking about on mysterious voyages. . . .

"Previous to sailing Captain Kidd buried his Bible on the seashore, in Plymouth Sound, its divine precepts being so at variance with his wicked course of life that he

did not choose to keep a book which condemned him in his lawless career. . . .

“ He sailed for Boston laden with booty, with a crew of swaggering companions at his heels. But no sooner did he show himself in Boston than the alarm was given of his reappearance and measures were taken to arrest him. The daring character which Kidd had acquired, however, and the desperate fellows who followed like bulldogs at his heels caused a little delay in his arrest. He took advantage of this to bury the greater part of his immense treasure which has never been found. . . .

“ Kidd died hard, for the rope with which he was first tied up broke with his weight and he tumbled to the ground. He was tied up a second time, and more effectually. Hence came the story of Kidd’s being hung twice.

“ The report of his having buried great treasures of gold and silver, which he actually did before the arrest, set the brains of all the good people along the coast in a ferment. There were rumors on rumors of great sums of money found here and there, sometimes in one part of the country, sometimes in another; with Moorish inscriptions, doubtless the spoils of his Eastern prizes.

“ Some reported the treasure to have been buried in solitary, unsettled places about Plymouth and Cape Cod; but by degrees various other parts, not only on the eastern coast but along the shores of the Sound, and even Manhattan and Long Island were gilded by these rumors. In fact . . . consternation had spread among the pirates in every part of the provinces; they had secreted their money and jewels in lonely out-of-the-way

places, about the wild shores of the sea-coast, and dispersed themselves over the country."

"The wild shores of the sea-coast," repeated Stephanie. Wind and booming surf gave answer that this might be the very place where these dreadful men had "dispersed themselves over the country."

She hated the book and yet was held by a dreadful fascination. She read the headings of pages and could not resist what was below: "Captain and Mate Murdered," "Fearful Situation of the Pirates," "Cruelty of Captain Low," "Ten Pirates Hung." She read the whole story of Blackbeard who was so called because of his "long black beard, which like a frightful meteor covered his whole face and terrified all America more than any comet that had ever appeared. He stuck lighted matches under his hat, which appeared on both sides of his face and eyes."

Here was Blackbeard's head dangling from the end of a pole against the sky.

Poor Stephanie had had that morning a terrible overdose of pirates.

For a moment she glared at this picture. She felt cold, she dared not move. It seemed as if winking an eyelash might cause pirates to reach out from corners, cupboards, under the bed, anywhere.

Then she gathered all the books together and jumped out of bed. Where to throw them? The window? It wouldn't come open. The door? But they would only be lying in wait when she went out. She must get rid of them somehow. Those hideous faces must be out of

the room before she could dress and make ready to run away, to New York, to tell *Herr Vater* about the dreadful wrong place she had been left at by mistake.

Aha! the hole in the wall!

Beneath it was a low cupboard and this she climbed upon by means of a chair, holding the books as far away from her as she could.

On tip-toe she raised *The Scourge of the Caribbean Sea* and thump! it was gone. *The Pirate Smugglers* followed and *The Black Avenger of the Spanish Main*. Last *The Pirates' Own Book* tumbled through and was heard to fall with a bang on the other side the wall.

CHAPTER IX

THE EVENING TRAIN

CAP'N PRICE and Roger did not come home at noon, as some of the neighbors' wives cooked a dinner for those who were helping Hosy Tonkins. Roger felt no concern about the new boarder. He had left bread and butter and bacon on the table, after numerous explanations to the Cap'n.

"Why don't you tidy up your galley? What's this junk for?"

"For Sadie when she comes down."

"Sadie who?"

"Sadie Wienerwurst."

"Never heard of her," said Cap'n Price.

About four o'clock, however, Roger heard a piece of news that he was sure the strange girl would like to know. Section hands had been all day at work repairing the railroad bridge and now word came that the evening trains would run. Roger posted off to the house to tell of it.

Just as he sprang up the steps he met the new girl coming out of the entry door.

"Listen! They say the 4.15——" He took a good look at her and stopped short. "What's the matter? Where were you going?"

She had on all her own things, including her hat and gloves and the white silk coat, much wrinkled and spotted. In her arms she was lugging the big fur-lined overcoat.

To-day she had managed four or five buttons on each shoe. Her face wore a look of determination rendered more grim by tear-puffed lips and eyelids.

"Sadie, what are you going to do?"

At Roger's sudden appearance she had jumped a little, as if she had meant to slip out secretly.

"I go away."

"Where to?"

"New York."

"You can't now. The trains aren't running. Maybe a train will go later. Did you mean to start right off?"

She nodded doggedly.

"I must. This is the wrong place."

"What!"

"Yes. I am brought on the wrong place. Here is not the place I am sent. Everything is wrong here. I have no bath, no clean clothes, no maid—nothing. Look only at such hair! And no one brings my trays. To go always without eating, that is not agreeable."

"What, didn't you find the bread and butter and bacon?"

"No, I have nothing. And it gives me an ill feeling within myself."

"Scotty! I should think it would. What've you been doing all day? Just staying upstairs having the dumps? No wonder you want to leave. But you had sump'm to read anyway—those books of mine."

She threw him a strange glance and shrunk back, hunching up one shoulder nervously.

"Those books. Ach!"

"Did you read 'em?"

"Yes, I read."

"Well, aren't they just dandy? I found 'em all in Cap'n's cupboard tucked away behind some other things. I can't think how they came there. Well, after I read 'em I got interested in this subject and went into it *thoroughly*, in the public library in town and thought out my secret. But pshaw; no use to talk about that now. You're sure going away?"

"Please, yes, sir," respectfully but positively. "This is one wrong place for me."

"I wonder if that's so. Maybe it is. Maybe that's why Mrs. Bill wasn't ready and Cap'n doesn't understand. Nobody told *me* any girl was coming. Well, all I can say is, somebody was awful careless. The fellow that brought you, he must have been a nut. Who was he anyway—somebody from Hoboken? You came in an auto, didn't you? Was it a Ford, or what? Who drove it?"

"A chauffeur drove and it is himself which I am looking for. When I know surely that this is the wrong place for me I think and I dress myself and come down-stairs. And I search, and there behind the door find this coat. He is *mein Herr Vater's* coat. 'So,' I tells myself, 'it is but one thing more—to discover that kind chauffeur who shall take me on New York and *mein Herr Vater* immediately.' Please, where is he? A great high chauffeur like giants, even? Wiz one great nose and spectacles and cap."

"Big and spectacles?"

"Yes. A chauffeur most peculiar. He names me always 'Highness' and when it is in the night, very cold and a great wind blowing, we stop in the road and play that game—I forget his name—one must shout

'You're it' and run and leap, and suddenly must one cower on the ground. Him who cowers thus man dare not touch. Know you such a game?"

"Don't believe I do."

"And that chauffeur being surprise, cry 'Ha!' and once he say 'By hump!' Like that—'By hump.'"

"What!" cried Roger, getting excited all in a minute. "He wasn't a great big e-normous fellow in a mixy suit and blue tie, was he? And black eyes that look sharp as an eagle's sometimes, and an awfully big nose, and shell-rimmed goggles?"

Stephanie nodded doubtfully.

"You didn't hear his name?"

"Yes, I hear his name. It is a comical name. He is Mr. Dansmith."

Roger threw up his arms and nearly tumbled off the steps backwards. "It is, it is! Oh, I'll find him for you! Pretty quick too. I'll show you Mr. Dansmith. What a joke! And I'd just come to tell you about the 4.15. Come on! Leave the big coat. Don't stop for anything. I hear the whistle at the Bonnet now. Oh, you're in the right place, all right. *That* chauffeur never made a mistake. Why didn't they tell me? He must have gone away the same night! Pretty howdy-do! Some mix-up! Say!"

Stephanie found herself running after Roger across railroad tracks, hurried and beckoned on by him. They ran down a yellow road, skirting pools of water which covered part of it, and came to a platform beside the tracks, where a little crowd of people had assembled.

Roger rushed into their midst, but Stephanie stood back at one side. She looked around, up the tracks

and down, out to the bay and sky in front of her and then turning, saw the ocean with a pearly horizon above it and heard it pounding softly. Way out on its deep blue a ship with four big square sails and some little three-cornered ones was riding along proudly in the evening light.

Suddenly she realized that the sun was shining and that Blue Heron was beautiful.

Only that minute indeed had the light burst through some dark clouds in the west—dust-feathers of the storm rolled up at the edge of a clear, cold sky. It reddened everything—the houses, flashing it back gaily from all their windows, the faces of the people, the hillocks, meadows, and shining beach.

How wide the world was here! No high buildings to be seen, no high land. Few trees, except one clump of scraggy pines against the sky. Water on that side, blue as ink, water on this side, bright and smooth with little dark islands on its breast. Between, white and dark green and yellow brown, the flat land rolled towards the northern sky.

Against that sky a little black puff shot up. It was right above the railroad tracks where in the distance they ran so close together that they almost touched.

All the people craned their necks to look that way.

"That's her! She's comin'! Roger Smith, get off them tracks!"

But Roger *would* jump up and down between the rails.

A great black ball loomed up upon the tracks. It grew larger, thundered nearer, let out white smoke and a long "Too-oo, too-too-too!" Roger skipped back to Stephanie's side and shouted:

"Watch the folks get off. Maybe you'll see somebody that you know."

The engine came roaring down upon them, snorted, stopped. People began to get off the train.

A crowd of rough-looking men climbed down first. They had unshaven faces and they wore slouch hats or caps and carried bundles done up in red pieces of cloth. They were something like the men that dug and shovelled where the streets were torn up in New York. When these had all come out of the car some one appeared behind them at the door—a very big, tall young man in a mixy suit and blue tie and a cap, with a huge nose and bright black eyes which were glancing in every direction. They espied two figures at one side of the crowd, and he waved his hat and laughed.

And Stephanie jumped up and down like Roger and screamed:

"Giant! Giant! Giant!" louder than she had ever screamed before.

The queer thing was that Roger was yelling at the same person:

"Dan! Dan! Hey, Dan!"

The giant stopped waving and turned to help a woman. She was a little spare woman holding a great assortment of bundles in her arms. He said something and motioned his head toward his two noisy friends. The woman looked and suddenly her bundles spilled in all directions on the platform.

Next moment Stephanie was looking into eyes as shy and eager as her own.

"Mr. Alan's little girl! My dear, dear child! I am Miss Janet Price."

CHAPTER X

EXPLANATIONS ABOUT THE NEW BOARDER

"DAN! Hey, Dan, are those your new men? Where are you going to quarter 'em? Say, Dan, was it really you brought that new girl down in a car? Where'd you get the car and what kind was it? Not a Ford, I hope? Did it have an automatic starter? Why didn't you wake me up? Did you know the Long Bridge went out? I bet the water was over it when you crossed. Did it feel shaky at all? Is it all fixed now? Where'd you meet Miss Janet? Whata you think of that new girl any how? Some name, hey? Say, didja ever hear anybody talk so funny? *Are those your new men?*"

"Yes, they are. Now, Boxer, you run after Miss Janet with her bundles and wait for me at the house till I get this bunch settled. Then I'll take a day off to answer your questions, but for the present, can 'em."

Miss Janet had indeed forgotten even her bargains.

The very second thing she said to her new precious charge was:

"Dear, child! You're not dressed warm!"

In a trice she had whipped off her fur piece and it was put round Stephanie's neck, her jacket over Stephanie's shoulders, her rubbers on the white boots. She seemed half minded to add her hat and who knows what besides, but contented herself with taking Stephanie by the hand

and hurrying her off down the road so fast that Roger had to run to catch up.

"Mrs. Pharo ought not to have let you go out dressed like this. I have an abundance of warm wraps for you in my trunk. Indeed they were all bought and I carried them the day I went to meet you. A wrecked freight train, it was, which interfered, and no one was hurt at all, so I feel I was perfectly justified in being indignant and I spoke to the conductor really forcibly—too much so perhaps—I told him the Pennsylvania Railroad ought to be more careful and they might cause a little girl in an automobile very serious consequences by their inattention. Mr. Alan had telegraphed you needed wraps and I had a splendid warm coat and a sweater and mittens and a brown cap, the kind children are wearing, with two white buttons on each side, and a veil and a muffler, and some furs I borrowed from the lady where I was boarding, and, of course, rubbers."

Miss Janet shook her head in reminiscence. "That was a trying afternoon. I was once at the point of sending several telegrams. It was very windy and my bundles did seem numerous and heavy by the time I reached Philadelphia just after the train I wanted had gone. But I took one on the other division in the hopes of intercepting you further south and there in that lonely station I almost gave way. The ticket young man sent a telegram to Mrs. Bill for me, and I waited until dawn. Then I felt sure you had gone another way—and Dan tells me he did change his route to shorten the distance. Well, heretofore I have had quite a longing for travel but now I can't understand why people enjoy it. When I reached Broad Street station at dawn that stormy morn-

ing I must confess that I wept bitterly. It wasn't the discomfort, or the worry, but I had been so looking forward to seeing you, my dear, for the first time."

" Didn't you know her before? " asked Roger, who had come up with them. " Hadn't you ever seen Sadie Wienerwurst? "

At this name Miss Janet threw out one hand as if to ward off a blow.

" Don't. "

" Don't what, Miss Janet? "

" Oh, nothing, nothing. I suppose it's too late now and I must reconcile myself. Your brother broke it to me on the train. "

Roger stared at Miss Janet dubiously. All this time the third member of the party had spoken no word but only taken shy, curious peeps around the edge of her many wraps at this, her latest Fräulein.

A little later, upstairs in her room, she was able to get a better look.

" Dear child, I've just heard from Roger that Mrs. Pharo didn't come to-day and you *went hungry!* Drink this milk at once and I'll bring you up a little tray and get supper immediately. Oh, it's too dreadful to think of! Hungry and shut up in this room to sleep on a straw mattress and wash in the old sink and stare at those kitchen cupboards. Mrs. Pharo meant well and I mustn't blame her too much. But for Mr. Alan's little girl! "

Very little and thin was the new Fräulein. Or was she the maid? She had a small, bony, high-nosed face, eager, bright-blue eyes, a gentle mouth, a little round gray

curl on each thin temple, and two vertical lines between her eyebrows. She moved quickly, held her head at one side to look at things. Stephanie kept wondering what this Miss Janet reminded her of and then it came to her —a Central Park robin.

She was pecking round the room setting it to rights. She plucked out the toothbrush between thumb and finger and cast it into the waste-basket.

“For Mr. Alan’s little girl! Ugh!”

This reminded her of the crowning grievance and she turned on Stephanie quickly.

“Oh, my dear child, how did you come to choose one like that?”

“I have not, but the thick lady choosed him.”

“What do you mean?”

“The toothbrush.”

“But I meant the name. I had such beautiful ones in mind, from stars and characters of fiction and queens of history and flowers and gems, not combined in one, of course, but offering such a pleasing choice. Why did you choose *Sadie Wienerwurst?*”

“In Central Park I get him from a girl which lives by her own *Vater* on top of a delicatessen.”

“A what?”

“A shop of delicatessen.”

“What is that?”

“Please, a shop of sauerkraut and schmierkase, kartoffel salat and pöckelharinge. I have once a Fräulein which takes me sometimes in such shops.”

“I don’t believe it was a nice ladylike place,” said Miss Janet with suspicion, and she took a prejudice that instant against everything connected with Fräuleins.

"My dear," she asked hesitatingly, "about your own name—why were you called Stephanie?"

"Only mein Fräulein say it is a Cherman princess of the name, and I have think it is perhaps by account of this I spik always Cherman."

Miss Janet stopped by Stephanie's chair and drew one small slender hand into her own and patted it and looked with eager affection at the upturned face.

But the new boarder only returned her look with one of doubt and reserve.

"Well, Janet, I drug myself off the bed soon's I heard you come in on the 4.35. You musta had a splendid long visit in the city. Well, we had our troubles here but we done our best. I read all your letters good and careful 'n' then used my own judgment. The little girl wa'n't much care, on'y she didn't come reg'lar to her meals and was kinda helpless—just set 'n' let me pick up arter her—and she's hard to make out, count of bein' an outlaw—Dutch, Rawger says, but I thought she talked more Swedish. But *quiet!* If I hadn't sent Rawger up to tap on the door I b'lieve she'd a set upstairs all night. It's too bad her folks is poor. How come you to take her, Janet?"

"She's the daughter of an old friend, Maria."

"Some your mother's kin?"

"No."

"Folks you went to school with?"

"No."

"Well, not any one's ever boarded here for I cert'ny don't recollect that name, Wienerwurst."

"Maria, your feathers will dye green but I still think

you would like black much better and there's time to write yet and it only comes to seventy-five cents at a little shop where they were very considerate and reasonable and——”

“Law, Janet! We got them feathers settled tee-finally afore you went. But these Wienerwursts—I surmised they wa’n’t well off when I saw their girl’s outfit—handsome outside but scanty underneath; socks and no sleeves this weather. What’s Mr. Wienerwurst do?”

“Oh, ah—the dear child says he has, ahem! a shop.”

“Shop, hn? Dry goods?”

“No.”

“What does he sell?”

“Oh,—various articles. Maria, I brought you a little present in my trunk and I wish it was more of a return for all your trouble. I’m so grateful to you——”

“Now don’t mention that. Give an inch and take an ell’s the rule here on the Beach, I guess. Well, I’d concluded her father was a street car driver, ’count a that brown fur coat she was wrop in. Do you expect any the other Wienerwursts down soon?”

“I don’t know.”

“Do they all talk that Swedish?”

“No, no. That is, yes. That is—Maria, you really ought not to stay out, with your back. Have you tried poultices?”

“Poultices! *They* wouldn’t ketch hold of my back. But that reminds me, what I principally stepped over for was to rec’mend Omega Oil for the little sufferer.”

“Who do you mean?”

“Why, Sadie Wienerwurst, for whatever’s the matter of her arm. Seems she come down here to get some

kinda cure for it. Is it anything that was in the Wienerwurst family?"

"Maria, isn't that Cap'n Bill going towards your back door from the station-house?"

"My goodness me! So 'tis. Well, you can finish 'bout the Wienerwursts next time."

Dan Smith had quartered his new gang on the old Newbold farm in a dilapidated house which stood in the shadow of the only grove of trees on the island, ten or twelve giant pines. As he was coming away after the assignment of bunks and blankets he found Roger waiting for him on a lumber pile.

"It's all right to-day but don't come around the bunkhouse any more, Boxer."

"Why, I've explored that old Newbold house and all this tract lots of times."

"Right. But from now on keep away. This is the toughest bunch of wharf-rats and hobos they've ever worked off on me. I've quartered 'em here instead of at Montague to keep them away from the Bayside Hotel and those places, if I can."

"Why doesn't Brother Morwood give good ones?"

"You may search me. He was grouchier than ever. Oh, he's got it in for me. Don't know how much longer I can stick it out—— Well, I've no business letting off on you, kid. What was it you were telling me about her Highness? Talks funny? She doesn't talk any funnier than you do sometimes."

"Dan, what do you mean about not sticking it out?"

"Just talk. Forget it. Tell me how you get on with her Royal Highness."

"Is that what you call her? She's a queer Highness. Oh, Dan, *some* show last night at supper! Cap'n got her name all mixed up and he called her Mrs. Weatherburst and Mrs. everything else till I could hardly sit up. I bet he hasn't got her number yet and we'll have some more fun to-night. And Dan, she's the queerest! She acts just as though Cap'n's house was a big hotel and thought, because the stairs were outside, they were a fire-escape, and she wanted a maid to button her shoes for her. And she took me for a bell-boy! Asked me to shag a pitcher of ice-water for her."

"Well, you brought her some, I hope?" said the giant soberly.

"N-no, I didn't. A fellow can't get to the ice-house very easy in a nor'easter. Besides, the idea of her wanting to be waited on like that! You don't really think I ought to have bothered, do you?"

"Yes, I think you might have managed it. I don't believe she'd ever been before where there weren't people to bring her what she wanted."

"But what kind of girl is she anyway? She said she'd never in her life been in a kitchen. What do you think the Wienerwursts live in—a balloon?"

"Never mind about the Wienerwursts. That little girl is lonely and scared and all mixed up by conditions she isn't used to. You do your best to make her have a good time. Haven't you done anything so far but make fun of her?"

"Yes, sir, Dan, I was awfully kind to her last night—so now. I saw she was sorter down in the mouth and I talked to her about some private affairs of mine and

lent her some of my books—intensely interesting ones that couldn't help but entertain her."

Dan threw an amused glance at his brother. "What was this intensely interesting reading?"

"Oh, just some books I had in my trunk," said Roger noncommittally.

By this time they had reached Cap'n Price's house, where a pleasant hum of order and comfort bespoke Miss Janet's presence. The brothers tramped upstairs and Dan entered their room first.

"Hullo, what's this! Books dumped on my pillow and one astride of the headboard!"

Roger took a look. "Why, those are mine! They're the ones I lent Sadie. How'd they come on the back of your bed like that? Why, I believe—" He glanced upward. "Do you know what that girl did? She must of poked 'em through the old stove-pipe hole!"

He looked at his brother with his eyes wide open at the enormity of this action. "Well, I like *that!* My precious books. And she a girl that talks so polite. I guess I don't ever put myself out for her again!"

"Easy now." Dan took the books from his brother's hand and read the titles. *The Pirate Smugglers, The Scourge of the Caribbean Sea, the Black Avenger of the Spanish Main, The Pirates' Own Book.*

He turned the pages, looking at the pictures. "So this is what you picked out to cheer up the poor little Highness." He began to chuckle. "No wonder she quit cold, shut up in a lonely room with pictures like these—a child that probably never heard of a pirate in her life. I don't blame her one bit for chucking 'em through a stove-pipe hole."

But Roger wore a look of deep injury.

"Oh, Father, what do you think of Mr. Alan's little girl?"

"Whose?"

"Alan Rand's. The little girl that's staying here."

"Alan Rand? He hain't got a girl."

"Oh, but he has, Father, though I didn't know it till a few days ago myself. Didn't you get my letter? I couldn't write much but I thought you would like to know Mr. Alan was going to entrust his only child to us. Don't you think she has a lovely face?"

"There ain't any person here by name of Rand."

"Yes, I know it's most unfortunate that we must call her something else until Mr. Alan himself comes down and straightens things out, but I hope he will soon—perhaps to-night's mail will have a letter naming the time. Next Sunday perhaps. I wonder which of the fowls I could kill. They used to be almost absurd about my cooking—poor Steve and Mr. Alan. Ah, well! But meantime we must call the dear child by a most unsuitable name. Perhaps they introduced her to you as—dear me!—Sadie Wienerwurst?"

"Weazlehurst?"

"No, Wienerwurst."

The Cap'n was drawing off his coat and Miss Janet could not see his face and therefore missed the humorous look which he exchanged with the wooden peg he draped his oilskins on. The fact was that Cap'n Aaron Price, though he did forget things and get matters sadly confused at times, was again much sharper than people gave him credit for. After he understood perfectly he would

sometimes have his little joke on Janey, of pretending to be yet in the dark.

"Wizzlehatch?" He shook his head. "I never ran foul o' that name before."

"Wienerwurst, Father," said Miss Janet, very distinctly.

Supper was ready. The table was spread with white, and at the place next Miss Janet's, between her and Roger, instead of ordinary crockery, a cup and saucer and plate were set forth, each ornamented with gilt bands and a moss rose and the words "Good Girl."

"They were mother's when she was a girl in New England," explained Miss Janet.

It was on a trip down East in the 1850's that Cap'n Price had met his wife. Miss Janet had gone to school there too, which explains why she spoke differently and was considered "educated" at Blue Heron.

"But why doesn't the dear child come down?"

The open oven door showed biscuits and a broiled blue-fish.

"What are we standing by for?" asked Cap'n Price.
"Why don't we come about, to eat?"

"I don't know what can be keeping her. I pressed out her frock and found some things that will do until my trunk comes and when I carried them up I told her supper would be ready as soon as she came down."

"She's prob'bly looking for a taxi," said Roger crossly.

"Let me go up and call her," said the giant.

When he knocked at the door of the old kitchen all was still within.

"Hullo, Highness. Won't you come out and speak to me? I didn't have a chance at the station, but I saw you all right and was glad you hadn't blown off the island while I was away. Aren't you coming down to supper? Miss Janet's got a dandy one—biscuits and honey. Doesn't that sound right to you? Why don't you come down? We're just waiting till you're ready."

The answer came in trembling tones: "I am not ready."

"What's the trouble, Highness?"

"My hairs, my hands—nothing is arranged. The thin one is no better than the thick one. She too goes away leaving me in a condition of unpreparedness."

The giant stared at the door. "Suppose you do the best you can and then come down. Miss Janet can't be always running upstairs, you know. You get ready, yourself, and come on down. Do it to please me."

A silence ensued. "So—I shall try."

"Right. I knew you were a sport."

He advised Miss Janet to begin, so they all sat down. By and by the outside door was heard to open.

Enter the new boarder, not quite so wild as last night but with an odd-looking head of hair. A strand on one side had undergone severe discipline and hung down straight over the shoulder. The rest was fuzzy and rough and some of it was in her eyes.

The giant jumped up and pulled out her chair. Miss Janet noticed hair and shoes and buttons and was not able to speak for a moment as it came over her that her new charge had needed help in these simple matters. But she took hold of her hand and patted it and she heaped her plate.

"Dear, dear child, I hope you haven't taken cold. You must drink this hot tea. Do you like tea? If there's anything that you're accustomed to that we don't have you can just whisper it to me and we'll get it if we have to send to Philadelphia. You must eat some honey. I never heard of a little girl that didn't like that. Roger, please pass the butter. I know Roger is going to be happy to have a little playfellow here."

Roger passed the butter but did not appear happy. A playfellow who threw his books through a stove-pipe hole didn't appeal to him at that moment.

Stephanie placed the butter dish at the left of her plate and with the butter knife she spread her biscuit daintily.

"Will you please pass the butter, ma'am," said Cap'n presently.

Stephanie saw that the eagle-faced old man had his eye upon her and she looked frightened but did nothing.

"I'd like to trouble that lady—— What did you say was the name, Rawger?"

"Sadie Wienerwurst."

"Beam-end-first? Mrs. Beam-end-first, I'd take it kindly if ye'd pass me a line on the butter dish."

Miss Janet took the butter and passed it by way of Dan, as Roger seemed to be having convulsions.

"Wien-er-wurst, Father," she pronounced anxiously.

"That's what I said—Beam-end-first."

Stephanie threw a distressed glance at the giant.

"Cap'n," interrupted that young man. "What was the fastest sailing record when you shipped on the *Cape May Belle* in '48?"

"The *Sea Witch* was then. That was before the other California clippers and of course the *Sword Fish* was

one of those, but a handsomer ship than the *Sea Witch* never rounded the Horn as I know with my own eyes for didn't she pass the *Belle* off Hatteras, not a cable's length away."

The Cap'n was launched on a favorite topic and through suppertime he discoursed of old sailing records and names like *Flying Cloud*, *Sea Serpent*, and *Rainbow* to the young man at his right whom he addressed as "Dannle."

To this same young man Stephanie felt a warm throb of gratitude. He seemed an old friend, true and tried, the only connecting link between her accustomed life and this eccentric place.

CHAPTER XI

LETTERS ABOUT THE NEW BOARDER

SURETY AND TRUST COMPANY
New York

24/3/14.

Dear Miss Janet:

Yours of the 21st, 22d, and 23d rec'd. Was sorry you had all that trouble trying to reach your party but am glad to note by your last that they reached Blue Heron all right and that you expect to get down to-day. I trust this will find you safely arrived and entirely recovered from discomforts already suffered in doing me this great kindness.

As I indicated in my telegram Tuesday evening, I was able to arrange matters here as well as I had hoped. I reached the hotel before any alarm was raised and was waiting there when the Countess came in. She made threats and has cancelled her sailing for the present. I doubt, however, if she takes the matter into the Courts. After I have laid before her the positive proof I now have against her son she will probably take up her residence abroad and this continent will see no more of either of them.

Now in regard to Stephanie. You will soon realize after seeing her how her life in a luxurious modern hotel has unfitted her for plain living. Besides, I want her to have everything Katherine gave her and more too. If

the case were taken into court they might leave the choice of guardians to the child herself, so I must give her some reason for choosing me—more new clothes, jewelry, Fräuleins to wait on her, etc. I'd hate the thought of not providing for her as well as Katherine. She must have a maid and a German governess. I am sending under separate cover a lot of circulars and addresses of places to hire such people. Am sorry to put you to this extra trouble but think it safer at present for you to make these arrangements rather than I. You could run up to Philadelphia to meet the candidates and look them over. I have full confidence in your judgment (confirmed since Tuesday by your choice of a chauffeur). You can quarter the governess at the hotel, can't you? I don't want to fill up your house but I mean to make it an advantage to you to take all this trouble. My idea is this—I think I expressed something of it the other day—You and Captain Aaron Price are to make your house thoroughly modern and comfortable and give up the boarders, hire extra help in your housekeeping and take things easy. That is how this affair is to work out for you.

If it were not that the child is better off under your roof I would suggest settling her at a hotel. As it is, she must have a large room with a private bath. This may entail some rebuilding for you but if you don't wish the arrangements to be permanent they can be torn out later.

As long as the Countess stays in this country it is best to be somewhat on guard. She doesn't know the child's whereabouts now, but I wouldn't trust her. You have followed my directions about the name, I suppose? What

is she—Semiramis or Lady Hester Stanhope? Destroy all my letters and be careful about mentioning me down there. Caution that young man to keep his mouth shut. I guess he's all right. I liked him. But I've gotten out of the habit of trusting anybody.

Be sure to write me fully about everything. If necessary I could meet you in Philadelphia to consult. In case the Countess sails I expect to go away on a friend's yacht for eight weeks or so, having promised before all this came up. After that possibly I can run down to Blue Heron occasionally.

Am inclosing New York draft for a thousand dollars. One reason for sending this, over and above what I handed you in Philadelphia, is that I want half of it spent for the child's clothes and knick-knacks—jewelry or anything she expresses a wish for. You can get things by mail from the big stores here. Katherine had the impudence to say "Where shall I have Stephanie's belongings forwarded? She has never lacked for anything under my care." I assured her that Stephanie would have no cause to complain in the future.

Miss Janet, I am deeply in your debt but I shall hope to make it up to you fully.

Please remember me with cordial greetings to Captain Aaron.

Yours sincerely,

ALAN H. RAND.

About that young man, Dan Smith, he would not accept anything for his services and that leaves me under an obligation to him. I hate obligations. Won't you find some way in which I can settle it at once?

Blue Heron, N. J.,

March 28th, 1914.

Dear Mr. Alan:

I am sending you your fur coat by express and you must have it tended to *at once* as a garment like that should not be exposed to moths, but tar and camphor will keep them out and only the odor which is sometimes disagreeable to gentlemen and certain belongings in the pockets, viz.: cigars, etc., which I felt a delicacy in removing kept me from putting it on myself.

But Mr. Alan, I must nerve myself to write you in a different strain, i.e., harshly. It is my duty and I will do it whatever the consequence though I hope you won't take the dear child away from here as that would be a terrible punishment.

I don't like speaking harshly to you and scarcely know how I bring myself to it when I remember two young lads arm in arm along this beach and my young brother making all his plans for "when Al gets here," and you with your beautiful city clothes and handsome face leaping from the train and rushing at him as if you had scarcely been able to live apart. Why, it seems only yesterday. Such a willful, high-handed boy you were but generous and such a persuader—always getting me to cook just what you wanted, never willing to put on extra flannel undergarments no matter what the provocation, always interested in some young lady but preferring Steve to them all.

Then you went to live in New York and we did not see you any more but, Mr. Alan, Steve never forgot you. Alas, after these recollections I must read over your

letter again in order to brace myself to say those harsh words.

I have now re-read your letter and feel sufficiently braced.

Mr. Alan, I am shocked at that letter. It was no kind of a letter to write and that is no kind of a way to feel and you ought to be ashamed and I shall not do most of the things you asked and here's your thousand dollars back and half of that you handed me in Philadelphia.

There!

I knew something was wrong when I saw you in Philadelphia but modern improvements and strange surrounding throw my mind into such a whirl that I am not equal to anything. You said the child does not care for you. How could you expect it, Mr. Alan, when your only idea of pleasing her is with money, clothes, jewelry, and servants? Those are not the things to win a child. I have known a great many children and young folks and they always took to me and I think I *do* understand children. I understand your little daughter though she feels strange with me (not knowing whether I am nurse or governess) and what I do know is that *love* and *play* are necessary for children and apparently this little girl has had neither. Perhaps you blame this on her auntie and I am sure I don't know what the lady can be thinking about but you are her father and here you propose to go off and spend eight weeks on a yacht when trains are running every day to Blue Heron. Mr. Alan, do come here, and don't send us any German ladies. If you will only let me teach her myself I will solemnly promise not to interfere with the dear child's Teutonic forms of speech, if that is what you wish, even such

expressions as "It gives in bathroom yet from towels nothing not." If that is the sentence construction of those races far be it from me to interfere with it, but German ladies in person I would prefer to do without. The circulars alarm me—so many talented persons out of employment! I wish I could accommodate them all. But not at Blue Heron for I really feel that would not be best.

As to the house we have, as I told you, a nice bathroom and I bought a lovely set of bedroom crockery, all apple-blossoms, besides new bedding, mattress, and furniture for the dear child's room and believe me, *she* shall never lack for towels no matter what the boarders say. I always get extra colored girls to help in summer and father will not allow me to build over this house.

Mr. Alan this little girl has eyebrows just like yours and if I were you I'd come right down to see her.

I trust you will believe me always.

Your friend and well-wisher,

JANET PRICE.

P.S. I almost omitted something else of a painful nature. Prepare your mind, Mr. Alan, for a shock.

Your sweet little girl is known here by the name of *Sadie Wienerwurst!!* It is the fault principally of the Pennsylvania Railroad and at one time I was on the point of laying it directly before the general manager, for if they had only been a little more careful with their freight trains which cost no human lives so that I don't feel any compunction for being annoyed she might have had a nice name. My choice was Evangeline Arethusa as a happy blending of poetry, fiction, and the vegetable kingdom.

The arethusa used to grow in the meadows at my mother's down-east home and it smells like violets. But *Sadie Wienerwurst!*

But I have just looked over your letter again. Perhaps you don't *even mind the name.*

Cap'n Price took his daughter's letter and package and started across the tracks in the spring sunshine. The ocean was blue as ink, the bay was sapphire, and Cap'n Aaron's eyes were a very bright blue in his handsome, hoary face. He delivered the package at the Adams Express building, and was headed for the post-office when he met Cap'n Bill Pharo.

"Sa-ay, Cap'n Aaron, they's a feller over tew the station-house says he can beat you out at checkers."

It was a warm spring morning, enlivened with the sound of hammers that nailed shingles to storm-torn roofs, sledges that rang along the railroad tracks, and the rolling back of doors of boat-sheds down in the meadows. The ocean drummed cheerily, frogs shrieked from the ponds like girl graduates giving a college yell

"Now all together—
Spring weather!"

and to the leeward of the station-house was a wooden bench, smooth, sheltered, and warm, exactly the right height for supporting on the knees one end of a checker-board.

Cap'n Price frowned across the bay and wondered what it was Janey had asked him to go to Bissell's for.

So the letter lay in his coat pocket, and four months

later when he sorted over the wreckage there, it was found and quietly posted.

Mr. Alan Rand was therefore somewhat puzzled to receive, two or three days after his man Boals had unpacked the fur coat and taken it to the hotel storage-room for summer keeping, the following letter from Miss Janet Price:

Blue Heron, N. J.

Dear Mr. Alan:

Dry Scotch snuff, I should have said, instead of tar and camphor.

But the unseemly *sarcasm, coldness, and violence* of my letter are what I chiefly regret. Do try to forgive me, Mr. Alan. I was all worked up.

Be sure to bring heavy woolen garments and change at Cranberry Low Bottom and forget my harsh words, though I cannot take back all I said.

Yours truly,

JANET PRICE.

Mr. Rand read this short note with surprise. Not only was he bewildered by its references to dry Scotch snuff but he had no idea what Miss Janet meant by sarcasm, violence, and harshness in a letter of hers. Indeed he could not remember her to have shown any of these traits at any time, and the words had no meaning for him.

However he went out to dine with some entertaining friends and forgot all about the matter.

CHAPTER XII

DAN'S STORY

DAN SMITH sat on the upper veranda at Cap'n Price's one evening, smoking. It was a warm evening of early April. He sat looking towards the bay but could hear the ocean thudding softly. He could hear voices over at Bissell's store, frogs in the meadows, the creak of ropes down at the old wharf. Everybody else was either out or in bed and the house was quiet. The tide was going down and a smell of the bottom of the bay came in, dank and weedy.

It was a peaceful hour but Dan Smith's thoughts were stormy. He was having trouble with his men and that meant trouble at the office of the Morwood Construction Company in Philadelphia, which was building the cement pier at Montague Beach. Morwood Smith, the president, was his step-brother and Roger's home was with him. Dan sometimes thought Morwood gave him the worst crew and a berth in an out-of-the-way place on purpose. If it had not been for his brother and Miss Janet Price he would have thrown up the job long ago. He might do it yet. It was almost impossible to get any work out of this crew; they were looking for trouble all the time. Let the Company find some one else to do their mean work—he'd shift for himself, get into a big scrap somewhere, down in Mexico or over across the

ocean in the Balkan countries where there was always fighting. Only for Roger—

Some one came tip-toeing through the unlighted room behind him and he looked over his shoulder at a little figure in a dark toga, standing in the open door.

"Hullo! What are you doing out of bed?"

"Please, I smell your smoke and come to find."

"Don't you know it's late? Boxer's in bed and snoring long ago."

"Yes, I hear him sleeping through the transom a long time."

"Did that keep you awake?"

"No, Giant, but I remain awake from thoughts."

"About what, for instance? What do you lie awake and worry over?"

"That is it—that is why I cannot sleep. I should worry."

Dan chuckled at this.

"You should worry—exactly, Highness. You should forget it. Why don't you cheer up and enjoy yourself? Oh, yes, I know what goes on here, though I'm away at Montague all day. I know about a little girl that creeps back and forth all day between her room and this porch and never goes a step farther. All day to think and still you must lie awake to do it in bed? And you're in the south chamber now, in the nicest room and the biggest, springiest bed in this house. What's the trouble?"

"Giant, I don't likes it here."

Dan rose and moved another big rocker up near his own.

"Highness, suppose you sit here—I'll get the afghan—so. Wrap it round you good and commence about the

worries. What I specially want to know is why any girl shouldn't like it here that has Miss Janet Price lying awake nights trying to please her."

Stephanie sat quite still. She could understand the giant better than most people because he talked so slow. It was almost two weeks since she came here and she had not grown used to anything. The only person she felt acquainted with was this same giant, but he was gone all day, away before she stirred in the morning, back to supper, but after supper she must go to bed. She sat on this veranda all day for no other purpose than to watch for him. She could make him out almost as far away as the pines. Sometimes he came up on the train unexpectedly and he always waved his cap at her and shouted something friendly. This was the only pleasant thing that happened here.

She began hesitatingly, not used to tell her troubles, but the story gathered strength as it went on.

"Giant, everything is here most strange and different. Clothes, even, and food are strange. At the Juilliard I have Gaston. He brings the breakfast into the school-room in a little cupboard of tin which has therein burning coals. I have an orange, a roll, and a cocoa. I have never hammineggs. I have, by all meals, butter on a little dish, herself. No other person takes my butter. A napkin, yet, by all meals new and smooth. I don't like napkins which are three days dirty. I don't like food out thick, black pans, from great black stoves. It makes me an illness in my interior. And clothes—you think I wear as these clothes at the Juilliard? Such scratching clothes! *Mein* clothes are soft. I have frocks of lace and silk and a *negligée* so beautiful. It is the color of

rose. Hannchen buttons them off me. She fills yet the bath. It is all my bath. There hang there no towels and sponges of others. Myself, I must turn the water here and it is *très difficile*—while it runs so fast away without the cork. And sometimes beneath my toes is sand. Ugh! I am very lengthy with the bath from thinking of all the peculiarnesses."

"Yes, we're aware of that. It's the only bathroom in the house, you know. But Highness, surely you don't want any one else to wait on you when you have Miss Janet?"

Stephanie wriggled beneath the afghan and was silent for a moment.

"I don't know Miss Chanet," she faltered.

"Don't know her? What do you mean?"

"I don't know is she my maid or governess. She understands nothing of a maid. I must walk around the room and of myself find my things. The boots, the great heavy boots I now wear, I must myself tie, and that is *so* hard and tedious. I have not enough clean clothes. But is it for me to give orders? Perhaps she is my governess and should herself say 'Listen!' and 'Nonsense!' 'Who you think I *am* here?' and all those unpolite things at *me*. Well, then where is my maid, which I always have? But yet—" She was evidently selecting words to express her puzzlement. "Miss Chanet she sews little presents on me—a pin-cushion resembling apples—a work-bag, has one cat embroidered—and as she offers these a look stands in her eyes of—kindness—and—and—I may not describe, but Fräulein or Hannchen—it is not so in their eyes ever."

The giant seemed to be turning things over in his mind.

"And Roger—you don't like him either?"

This was embarrassing. "I think I don't like boys, Giant," she began evasively. "I don't *got* to like them. My Fräulein lets me hide when they come on the verandas at hotels. It is always just alike with boys. They speak too loud and the finger-nails are always *schrecklich*."

"Those the only counts you have against Roger? Out with 'em."

She muttered, "By meal-times he laughs at me."

"There's something else too. Now isn't there? What makes you act as if he had sump'm catchin' when you pass in the hall?"

"I don't like he lends me any more books."

The giant suppressed an odd sound. "Ha! That's it, is it? Well, I don't think he will. It *was* a pretty stiff dose for you that day. Let me see—there's nobody left but Cap'n, besides me. You don't care for Cap'n especially?"

"He names me Mrs. What-for-thing and makes Roger laugh."

After a moment the giant said soberly, "Of course I know it's a great change here from what you were used to in New York. I knew all about that when I first looked at you there at the corner of Fifty-xth Street. You say you had a governess and a maid besides the regular service of the hotel. Spiffy clothes and swell meals. Everything you wanted by pressing a button or mentioning it in the telephone. And you didn't go to school, did you, but had private teachers? And when you went out you were wrapped up in furs in a big closed

car and somebody with you, governess or maid, that gave directions to the chauffeur through a speaking tube. Oh, I've seen the likes of you in more cities than one and from several different angles. But, Highness, what I wonder, from what you've said and the little that Miss Janet told me and from my own observation—was it much fun there? Did you have a lot of fun in your fine New York hotel?"

Stephanie stopped rocking. Across her mind passed a procession of tedious mornings and dreary afternoons, which she had lately forgotten. "Having fun"—that very expression she had picked up from a group of children in the park and had even written down in the lost journal.

"N-no, not any fun."

"Perhaps, though, you were awfully fond of the people you lived with—your aunt, wasn't it? And the governess? Did you love her much?"

She waggled her head slowly from one shoulder to the other. "No, I love them not any. Tante is so hard and cross and Fräulein always talks of Vaterland. Hannchen too is cross if I but rumple my frock a little. Gaston is good but I cannot see him much and Sadie in the park I have only once beheld."

"There wasn't any one in New York then that you liked very much?"

"*Mein Herr Vater*, only," she answered shyly.

"Oh, your father?"

"Yes, truly. I have him most like of all the world."

The giant said, "Miss Janet didn't tell me much but she did mention that your father used to come down and stay here long ago. Did you know that?"

"I don't understand. Was he a little boy?"

"I don't know anything about it. I only know that Miss Janet must have set her eyes by him. That day in Philadelphia when she sent me after you she said in a kind of hushed voice, 'It's Mr. Alan Rand's little girl.' Might have been 'the Angel Gabriel's little girl,' the way she spoke it. Now I take it that your father thinks very highly of Miss Janet, or he never would have sent you here." He broke off to ask, "Are you warm, Highness?"

"Yes."

"Don't you feel sleepy enough to go to bed now?"

"*Aber no*, Giant. I am so full awake. Here is much nicer as my bed."

"Miss Janet's over at Tonkins' helping with their sick baby and Cap'n and Roger are both asleep, so that's why we've got this deck to ourselves. Hear those frogs! Highness, I've a good mind to tell you a story about myself—something I hardly ever do. Roger, even, doesn't know this one, all of it—I hate so to rake it up. But I was thinking, perhaps, it's the right dope for both you and me to-night. Would you like to hear a story?"

"Yes, Giant."

"Let me see, how old are you?"

"I have elefen years."

"Well, when I was thirteen I ran away from home. You see I had step-brothers and sisters older—my father was much older than my mother—and they used to plague me and I used to torment them. We're not entirely over it yet. This Morwood Smith I work for, head of the Forbes and Smith Construction Company in Philadelphia, is my step-brother. Well, they used to tell on me

and I got sore about it and one day there was a big rumpus about some mischief I had done and I ran away from home.

"Do you get me? Do I use words you don't savvy? It was like this—carrying a couple of shirts and a pop-gun (I was as small a kid as that) and some crackers and cheese and about two dollars, I slipped out of my father's and mother's house, caught on a freight train and went out West. I never came back home again for six years!

"Don't think but what I wanted to. Six years—I'm not going to tell you about those six years. There's a lot of it I've tried to forget entirely. It made me old and it made me wise—as a street kid must be old and wise. I slept anywhere, ate bad food, had no friends. But after awhile I was lucky in getting a job in a machine shop—I was always crazy over machinery, and I stuck to it and learned a great deal, and I attended night-school all that time. Afterwards got a better job as assistant to a master mechanic. That was when I was seventeen. It was out on the West Coast.

"My father spent far more than he could afford trying to trace me but those first two years I wasn't traceable. He and my mother broke down, grieving. I started home twice; once my money was stolen and the other time I stopped to nurse a fellow that broke his leg—he'd been good to me. I was nineteen before I came East. Then I couldn't make up my mind to go at once to our town and I came down to Atlantic City and got a job as lineman on one of the piers there.

One day they sent from one of the hotels for a man to make repairs for a broken current and I went. While

I was working right by the desk in the public office, a man came in leading by the hand a little boy. I saw them the minute they came in that lobby. He had a grip in his hand—had just come from the train—and he signed the register directly under my eyes as I was working:

*“‘Morwood Smith
Brother.’*

“Yes, it was my step-brother, Morwood Smith, though he had changed and raised a beard. But the little chap? Brother? I couldn’t take my eyes from them and after I had finished the job I hung around until they came down-stairs again.

“They stayed three days and I gave up everything to watch them. It was the little boy that got me crazy. I thought about him all day and dreamed of him at night. The third day when they came out of the hotel with grip and umbrella, bound for the train, I followed them and when they had taken their seats I screwed up my courage and walked in beside them in the car.

“‘Morwood,’ I said, ‘I’m Dan.’

“His expression didn’t change. He’s got a clammy way of not letting out what he knows. Perhaps he’d already spotted me, dogging them around in the crowds. But I only cared to know one thing——

“I asked him, ‘Morwood, who’s that little boy?’

“Then he told me. It was my little brother born after I left home.”

The narrator leaned forward and knocked his pipe

empty against the balustrade and remained with his elbow on the railing bent forward staring into the dusk.

" My mother was dead and father didn't live very long after that. He made Morwood give me a job and he provided for Roger's schooling. Mother had left a letter to me saying that Roger was her bequest to me:— If I ever came back she wished I would make him my special care. But Morwood is fond of him, I think, in his peculiar way and after father's death he arranged for Roger to live with him. My other step-brother and sisters were all married. I boarded around by myself and did my work and pretty soon got a slight raise. Morwood's always finding fault and hates me for one reason and another, chiefly for my size, I guess, as he's a small sliver, but I rather think he finds me useful in the business. One day he called me into the office and said I was to go down to a place called Blue Heron on the Jersey coast to get ready to lay cement sidewalks. I'd never heard of Blue Heron and cement sidewalks didn't appeal to me very much and any way I liked to be in town where I could see the kid—he'd taken a wonderful shine to me from the very first. But it didn't do any good to argue. I was elected to lay sidewalks at Blue Heron.

" Well, I got here in March, Highness, same as you, and in a storm. It was snowing so I couldn't see the bay as we came across, and blowing, and the surf roared, and this place looked like the world's end. I got off out there by the track and stood, not knowing where to go. Hadn't brought any men with me as I had merely come to look things over and I couldn't see as there was any village here to speak of. A man came along and I asked him

where I could spend the night. He said the hotel wasn't open but perhaps they'd take me in at Price's.

"I found this house and knocked at the door and it was opened by a little bit of a woman with nice kind eyes. Before I had more than half-explained myself she caught sight of my feet and began at me, very worried:

"'You haven't any rubbers on and your feet are wet. Don't you know that snow is very penetrating? Come right in and change. I'm afraid you've taken cold already,' and so forth and so on. You know how Miss Janet does. But if you haven't had any one to care whether your feet were wet or not in years it sounds kind of good.

"They took me in and she and Cap'n couldn't do enough for me. You know Cap'n's son died and they say I resemble him. By and by I was glad when the Company kept assigning me to work down here, for it seemed like home. And then Miss Janet did something for me; she got Morwood to let me have Roger here in his vacations. I don't know how she ever did it, timid as she is, but once her sympathies are aroused she can nerve herself up to anything. She went up to town one day and what she said to Brother Morwood I don't know but now I have Boxer here with me whenever he is not at school.

"That's the kind of friend Miss Janet's been to me.

"Now listen:—three weeks ago I went up to town to get a gang to start work on the pier. They told me at the office Miss Janet Price had been there and left word for me to come up at once where she was staying. When I saw her face I concluded Cap'n had got back the money that was stolen from him long ago. (They need money

now on account of the trouble the Land Company is making for 'em.) But no, the news she had to spring on me was this,

"Mr. Alan's little girl is coming to stay with us!"

"And she looked at me as if she thought the thing would topple me right over.

"Who's he?" I said. Then she sobered down and told me that twenty-five years ago a young fellow, a boy in his teens, had stayed at this house and his name was Alan Rand. He and her brother Steve were pals and evidently they all looked upon him as something wonderful, way ahead of the rest of human kind. And now his little girl was to be entrusted to her care.

"Then she told me I had been appointed to the honor of going after this Royal Highness. I was to take a trip to New York and there get further orders about bringing her down through Jersey. You know the rest about that.

"Well now, it's most time for Miss Janet to get back from Tonkins' and if she finds me keepin' you up with this seven-night's entertainment I'll hear some plain truths spoken, for once.

"About Boxer, I'm disappointed you don't get on with him. He's got a lot of book notions, like this craze over pirates, but otherwise he's all right. Boys are not girls, you know, and they're not interested in acting ladylike. But it don't hurt boys to play with girls and when I first saw you and that night as we came along down together I thought to myself, this will be fine for Boxer to have *this* kind of a little Highness to play with. He hasn't any mother or own sisters or any woman belong-

ing to him. He and Morwood live like two owls up there in town.

"So, as I say, I'm disappointed, but if you're afraid he'll shock you and muss things up too much—I don't see but what you'll have to keep on shunning him."

"Cap'n Price is an old man, Highness. He's been a brave man and saved many a life from the surf along this coast, which is made dangerous by sandbars. But trouble and disappointment came along and some cogs in his brain got out of gear; however he's a good deal sharper than you think sometimes and is a mighty fine old fellow."

"Now about Miss Janet—well, I won't point any more morals except to say again, she's the best friend I've got and I wouldn't wonder if she was yours too."

"It would be fine if you came to like Blue Heron. When you came out to-night I was thinking uneasy thoughts. You see I've been foot-loose once and that's a hard habit to cure altogether. But, bless you, in the bottom of my heart I know Blue Heron is the spot *I* like the best in all the world, because it's more like home."

"Now good night, little Highness, and you'll jump right into bed after this, won't you? I don't know as I ever spoke so long at one spiel before. Are you cold?"

"No, Giant." She took hold of his big hand and tried to express herself. "It was a such nice story. I understand. It is good we tell so much on each other." She was reminded of her first confidante. "Giant, you never find that journal of my life, no?"

"No, Highness. I remembered and shook the car good next day but it wasn't there. Now cut along to bed."

When Miss Janet came in from the neighbor's she thought she heard some one calling her. Yes, it was a voice from the south chamber where for two weeks her new guest had held aloof, looking at her when she came to help her with eyes like some proud wild animal that is being tended with services that are awkward and unwelcome.

"Miss Chanet."

"What is it, Dear?"

When she came beside the bed she was astonished to receive a kiss on her hand.

"Miss Chanet, I understand yet. You are one friend of mine and not a Fräulein."

CHAPTER XIII

THE OLD SAFE:—CHART NUMBER ONE

It was not so easy to make up with Roger.

Every morning at breakfast Miss Janet said something like this:

“Why don’t you two dear children plan some pleasant pastimes together? I think, Roger, our little newcomer would like you to show her where to gather shells.”

Whereupon Stephanie would look embarrassed and Roger exceedingly glum.

And every night Dan would speak to Roger.

“What makes you shy off from Her Highness so? She won’t bite you.”

“I don’t shy off. But I’ve got things more important than girls and shells—things that if she tried she might get her feet wet or step in the sand or something.”

“But you ought to show her the ropes a little. Teach her to fish off the dock. I’ll lend you my rod. Or get the *Susan* into the water. I’ll help you. She ought to learn to handle a boat.”

“Yes, and she might take a notion to pitch it through a stove-pipe hole,” said Roger bitterly.

Stephanie, when Miss Janet urged her to make friends with Roger, said, ruefully:

“Roger *lieber* not be a friend wiz me. He turns the back at me when I go near.”

So everybody gave up the attempt. Stephanie after

an hour or two of lessons hung about the house forlornly.

She grew to like the lessons. There was an old geography in which somebody had painted all the scenery red and purple and put moustaches and bonnets on the "Animals of North America." And she and Miss Janet had funny times understanding each other.

"What is a decimal, my dear?"

"Please, Miss Chanet, it is this way:—You have a fracture and *ein Punkt* sits by him, next each other, and he is decimal."

"No doubt you are right, dear child, and your poor auntie had some good reason for imparting these Teutonic ideas which I have promised your papa not to interfere with for the present, but at the same time I must urge you to think of decimals as expressions of tenths, hundredths, and thousandths."

One morning Stephanie spoke of something she had been thinking of ever since Dan's story on the veranda.

"Miss Chanet, you like my *Herr Vater*, yes?"

"Dear me, child, of course I do! Why, I knew him when he was only a few years older than Roger, with brown cheeks and a blue cap, and always asking for pie."

"So! A cap? Continue more, Miss Chanet. I love to hear."

"Of course you do. I told him so," cried Miss Janet, beaming. "I knew you were interested in your papa." And she related on the spot as many stories as she had time for, all beginning, "When Mr. Alan was here with my brother Steve."

It was a wonderful thing to find some one that loved to talk of the person she had always been snubbed for mentioning, her secretly idolized father.

"Miss Chanet," she said, twisting a corner of that lady's apron as she was gathering up the books to go away.

"Yes, love."

"When—when—you have *Herr Vater* so fond, would it be polite—— You think I am too bold?" she interrupted herself.

"Go on, my dear."

"To write a letter, imploring he shall come here once again. Tell him you have here that same place he came long ago when that blue cap he wore, and you like him to come, and Cap'n Price, and tell him his daughter Stephanie, even, she likes it. Is it polite to write such letters?"

"It is not only polite, dear love, but I have written inviting him. I didn't say that you wished it as I did not know it then. You must tell him all about that when he comes."

Stephanie began to clap her hands. "He comes then! He comes soon!"

"I hope so. He hasn't answered yet and I think that must mean yes. At any rate he has written nothing to the contrary."

"I hope, then, he never writes to her," said Stephanie, thinking the contrary must mean Fräulein.

Miss Janet was overjoyed. She went about saying to herself, "The dear child adores him. What a wonderful —what a delightful surprise for Mr. Alan when he comes!"

She watched every mail for the letter she expected which would say that he had set a near date for his visit. She even dropped him an extra postcard:

"Weather lovely. Trains running on time. Charming surprise in store for you. When do you come?"

Nevertheless day after day went by and brought no letter from New York.

The lessons lasted only an hour or two as Miss Janet had much work to do. Stephanie was left sitting, a lady of leisure, in the parlor or veranda upstairs. Which was lonely and dull.

One morning Miss Janet could not stop for a single story as she had to go on the train to Montague Beach.

Stephanie looked at the cabinet of shells but she had seen these already many times; she went out on the gallery but it was raining a little and fog hung so close that even the big pines could not be seen. Then she read two books Miss Janet had left for her, called *Christmas Blossoms* and *The Juvenile Keepsake*. They slid off from her lap and she found herself thinking of the pirate books. If she had them here she could cover over the dreadful portions with her hand while she looked up that part about gold bars and diamond crosses buried in the ground. Aunt Katherine had a large diamond cross locked up with many other pretty things in velvet cases in a little safe. She herself had had in New York a pearl necklace, pins, locket, and a watch. She had not cared much for them. But it would be interesting to find such things in the ground. She thought if she had some kind of a shovel and if it were not raining and if Cap'n Price were nowhere around she might go downstairs and step off the veranda and dig a little.

This idea took her, at any rate, down to the lower porch. She had scarcely walked the length of it before. It extended around the closed-up part that had been a

store. There were four shuttered windows and, facing toward the bay, big double doors with a faded sign over them, "Price's General Store and Market." Each side of these doors was glass covered with newspapers.

No diamond crosses were in sight, even when you came as near the ground as this. She walked all around and looked closely. At the far side of the house one of the wooden shutters had blown open and in some curiosity as to what a store at Blue Heron might be like she pressed her face to the glass to look in.

She was very much surprised to see Roger get up from the floor in there. He knocked on the inside of the window and shouted:

"Go round and come in if you want to."

Seeing she didn't understand he disappeared and presently hailed her from the corner of the house.

"The way you get in is through the pantry; I'll show you. Cap'n's over at the station-house playing checkers."

They went around the porch to the entry door and he led her through the kitchen and a long pantry into a great shadowy room with dim objects pushed against the walls.

"This is the old store they use for a dining-room in summer. Where I'm investigating is over here in the post-office part. I don't mind if you sit on that stool and watch me. Miss Janet asked me to sorta look after you while she went to town but I hadn't gotten round to it yet. You see what I'm engaged in is so interesting it makes me rather absent-minded."

He seated himself on the floor in front of an old safe. Stephanie climbed upon the stool he had pointed to and sat there with folded hands.

Once this had been Cap'n Aaron Price's store, with storerooms back of it and his home above it, reached by a diagonal flight of stairs outside the south wall. Now, in spite of other changes, it was still the old store. Each side the front doors were glass show windows. An eight-foot butcher's block stood at the back of the room near the door to the meat-safe. All the walls were lined with shelves. One corner had been the post-office, fenced off by a counter supporting an arrangement of private boxes with names inked over them, A. NUMMY, T. J. NEWBOLD, W. CRAMMER. In the end of this alcove stood the safe which Roger was examining.

It contained tall books and loose papers and bundles of small papers. Roger took them out one by one and examined every leaf. From time to time he glanced out of the corner of his eye at his companion. It is possible that he put on some extra flourishes, and frowned, and muttered over the papers because she was there.

"I suppose you wonder what I'm doing?" he remarked at last.

"Yes, sir," said Stephanie politely. Miss Janet had told her to answer the Cap'n thus.

"Well, I'd tell you—only for one thing."

"Yes, sir."

"What you did to those books I lent you. It was a mean way to act when I was trying to make things pleasant, and besides, those books are valuable; you can't buy any more like 'em."

"Yes, sir."

"What struck you anyway?"

Stephanie opened her eyes wide.

"No one has struck me any."

"I didn't mean *that*. But why did you fire those books I lent you through the hole in the wall?"

"Oh—that? Please, it is the pictures which give me a nervousness. It is a picture of Mr. Blackbeard without his body. Something seized me that I must lose those pictures or get nervous exceedingly. Also—I climbed and I pushed and they fell beyond the wall. It is not very polite on the books and I beg them to apologize."

"Beg the books to apologize! You say things funny. Some of the time I can't hardly understand you and I don't believe the people in Blue Heron village could at all. That would be a great advantage if I should decide to tell you things. You'd be safe. Well, it's all right about the books now you've explained. You see I do hate to have my things spoiled—— Dan calls me old maid sometimes. Those pictures *are* pretty stiff, for a girl. I guess you don't know much about pirates, do you? Did you ever read *Treasure Island*? You *didn't!* Why, I thought everybody had read that. I'll have to help your education along. Well, if you read even the preface of the *Pirates' Own Book* it tells about buried treasure—money and stuff they hid in the ground?"

Stephanie brightened. "Yes, sir. A diamond cross. But I could not see it in the sand."

"In the sand?"

"I walk the veranda quite around to find it."

"The veranda! You didn't expect to see a diamond cross lying on top of the ground near the porch! Why, you poor snip, the pirates chose the most unlikely place they could find, where it was lonesome and wild. Then they dug a deep well. In Novia Scotia there's treasure

buried a hundred feet deep and nobody can get it out 'cause the pirates made tunnels to let in the ocean in case anybody went to fooling with their loot. I see you're awfully uninformed. Listen. What you have to do is to find *a chart*. A chart is sometimes on paper but generally on parchment, which is kind of leathery. We wouldn't find a parchment one, probably, but only a copy, that's been passed from hand to hand and then laid neglected for years. And they's a map on it or a sort of plan, and somewhere in the plan one spot, peculiarly marked with crosses, and that's where the treasure is buried. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir." Stephanie sat leaning forward, looking down at him solemnly, with folded hands and her toes together on a round of the high stool.

"Well then, the first thing I want to know is:—Can you hold your mouth shut?"

Slowly with questioning eyes upon his face she raised her hands and took a good pinch on her lips. "So?"

"Oh, shucks!" giggled Roger. "You *are* a circus! I mean can you keep a secret? Not tell?"

"Not tell. Ach, yes! I understand not-tell and can do it perfectly."

"All right then." And Roger told her his great secret. "I'm looking for a pirate chart myself."

Stephanie stared at him, duly impressed.

"Don't you remember I told you I'd studied up this subject in the public library in real histories? This isn't just nut-work. Pirates were all through Jersey. They came down from South Amboy, because they could bring their stuff in there without paying duty, and they came up from Chesapeake Bay and Delaware Bay. Of course

they brought their treasure along—but hunting for buried treasure along this coast doesn't seem to have occurred to anybody, only me. When I found I was going to spend the spring and summer here with Dan I just decided to make buried treasure my principal business. And I've quietly looked around and made a few mild inquiries, but no living person remembers any pirates, except they all say there's an old fellow over on the mainland called Pirate Pinneo. I intend to look him up some day. But everybody agrees the oldest settlers on this island were Prices and Newbolds, and Cap'n Bill Pharo says he reckons Cap'n Aaron must have some terrible ancient records in this house. That's why I'm going through this safe.

"I asked Cap'n, could I look in it, being interested to see what the inside of a safe was like anyway. And he said 'Sure,' there wasn't anything in this one but the store books and old bills. But Cap'n's memory isn't very good, you know, and there's no telling what may be here. Now do you want to help?"

Stephanie nodded gravely.

"Good. 'Cause if we find the treasure do you know what I'm going to do with it? I'm going to give most all of it to my brother Dan to give him a course at the University of Pennsylvania."

He explained further: "He's had lots of hard luck, Dan has, and awfully few chances. But if he had a course in engineering he could get some big jobs, he's so clever. Brother Morwood won't give him the money for it. So it's up to me. Wouldn't you like to find it for Dan?"

"Ach, yes! I like to find for him something *schön*."

"I thought you would. Well, then, that's settled. Let's shake hands. That means we're partners in this through thick and thin. Now get down off that stool."

He cleared a place for her on the floor.

"I'm very systematic and always see things through to a finish. I look at every separate scrap. Now you take those I hand you and do them up into bundles again."

Outside, the rain drizzled steadily and fog hung over land and water. In here they turned over many yellow papers which proved to be only bills and lists and agreements concerning lumber, lard, calico, kerosene, clams, fish-hooks, wallpaper, seamen's coats, butter, eggs, canned corn, rubber boots. And yet Stephanie felt that she had never spent a pleasanter morning. She helped, and Roger treated her confidentially, and he explained things she had never heard of before, and he promised to show her round the beach, teach her to sail, swim, crab, and fish, and take her down to Montague where Dan was building the pier.

"And I tell you what, Sadie:—It's evident you haven't read the proper kind of books. When we're round together I'll tell you the stories from all the best ones I've read."

Without knowing how it happened they had become fine friends.

However, the bundles of papers and the books were all stacked up between them at last and the safe stood bare. Roger opened the two little drawers and the small door above and found nothing.

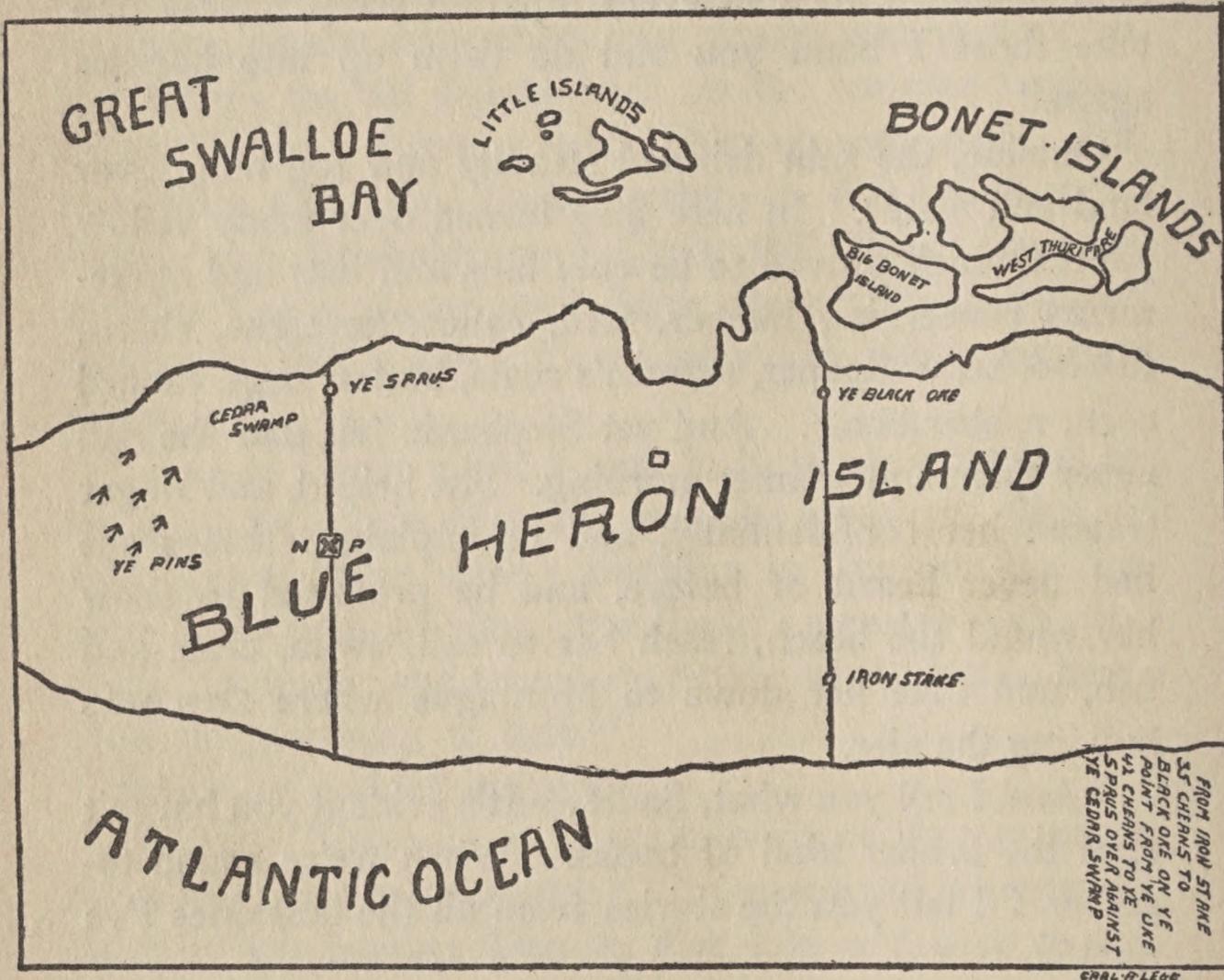
"Pshaw! I did hope this was the place."

At one side the metal lining had sprung away from the

wall of the safe a little. Stephanie pried at it with her finger-nail.

"You don't look yet in here."

"Oh, that's just part of the wall of the safe torn loose."



"There is *aber* a paper there, inside—a blue paper."

Roger applied his finger-nails and drew out of the space a dusty, crackly sheet, white on one side, faded blue on the other, with lines marked in white on the blue.

"Say, this is a map. Look here. It says 'Big Bonet Island' and 'Little Islands' and 'West Thurifare.' Here's the ocean. Here's the big pines, spelled 'Pins.'

And it's measured off—From Iron Stake thirty-five cheans to ye Black Oke and forty-two cheans to 'Ye Sprus over against a Cedar Swamp.' It's a kind of chart. You don't suppose—— Sadie, look at this! A tiny square with a red cross on it and letters each side—P and N." Roger's voice sank to a tone almost of solemnity.

" You think——" began Stephanie, frowning over the old paper and trying to co-ordinate all she had heard that morning.

" I think it's just what we're hunting for. I think that little square's the treasure! Hooray! Sadie, you're a jim-dandy and we'll begin the search ere another sun has set—that is, to-morrow, if the rain clears off and I can get hold of Cap'n's tools." He scanned the paper for a long moment and finally held it out with his finger on the significant spot. 'I've been trying to think what those letters stand for, and now I've got it—*pearls* and *nuggets*."

CHAPTER XIV

FIRST EXPEDITION

AT the supper-table Dan was surprised to catch his brother making signs to the new boarder. He made digging motions with his fork and then screwed one eye shut and drew up a corner of his mouth, evidently to express some pleasant mutual understanding. The giant laughed to himself and wondered how the frost had thawed.

Miss Janet was even more surprised when, right after breakfast next morning, Roger appeared before her and said:

"Please, Miss Janet, it's a corking day and couldn't Sadie get off from lessons to do something awfully interesting, she and I have planned?"

There was Stephanie too, bashful but eager.

Miss Janet got as far as, "Why, I thought——"

But being a wise person she only said, "Certainly. I think she needs a holiday. But remember, Roger, she isn't accustomed to hard play and exercise."

"Yes'm."

A few minutes later she saw them setting off along the gravel road and if the rate at which the two pairs of feet twinkled over the ground was any sign, they certainly had some interesting goal in view.

"For all the world like two sandpipers on the beach," said Miss Janet, watching their feet. "Now how did they make friends so quickly?"

She saw them next on Grassy Point just above the village and later from an upper window made out two figures down by the surf dragging heavy objects, pacing, stooping, waving to each other, and transferring articles from place to place.

By dinner-time they had reached Duck Point which wades out toward Little Islands a half-mile south of the Cap'n's. She had to blow the dinner horn to get them home.

They came in after every one was seated. Dan happened to be there for dinner too. Both the youngsters had red faces, sparkling eyes, and they seemed greatly preoccupied.

Roger said, "Yes, Cap'n," "No, Miss Janet," "Dan, please pass the salt," but only to the person across the table did he address anything more confidential:

"Good luck, wasn't it, Sadie, we struck the B.P. out on G.P.?"

Sadie dimpled and grew scarlet at being thus singled out.

"You know—that old stump of a B.P. we have to measure from?"

She nodded.

"Better yet if the S. turns up on the other P. Because then, you know, all we have to do is to take that place on the surf and divide the line in half and there's the very spot to d. for the a-hem."

"Miss Janet," said Dan, "don't you think when you cut the A.P. it would be a good thing to leave out S.W. and R.S. for fear of an a-hem?"

Miss Janet, who had been serving the food, now took her first good look at her young charge.

"My dear love! You are all mussed up and your nose is burned! You must lie right down after dinner and let me put cold cream on your face and darken the room while you take a little nap."

"Oh, Miss Janet!"

Two pairs of cheeks caved in with disappointment.

"Miss Janet, she can't. She and I are occupied with something important out toward the Newbold tract. It takes two to do it and Sadie's getting to be quite a help."

"What's that about Newbolds'?" spoke up Cap'n Aaron.

"They mustn't go on the Newbold land, especially now Daniel has his men quartered there. Roger, you mustn't take this little girl down there."

"Boxer has his orders about that already," said Dan.

"Well, we're only just near the edge and you know, Dan, nobody knows where the edge really is."

"Sh!" said Miss Janet; Dan gave his brother a look, and Roger glanced at Cap'n Price and subsided.

Miss Janet after dinner asked Dan's advice about letting the new boarder go out again and he said, as the youngsters stood listening:

"Yes, I think it's all right. Pleasant weather, isn't it, after the recent frost." He pretended to shiver, which made them laugh. Then he said to Roger emphatically, "Remember, don't go near the bunkhouse."

That afternoon Cap'n Price turned the whole place upside down. Something had called to mind a certain set of instruments he owned and a certain problem in which they figured. It was a matter his daughter wished him to forget because his efforts had been in vain and had only made him restless and excitable with thoughts of old

wrongs. But something had reminded him to-day and he could be heard tumbling things around in the shed and talking to himself.

Miss Janet herself was much inconvenienced in not being able to find her coal shovel.

At four o'clock Stephanie sat on the peak of a sand-hill from which she could see almost the whole island and the waters on each side of it. Roger had posted her there as a sort of flagstaff. The sand dunes lie between the flat beach and the bluffs, which slope down to the meadows. Thus Stephanie on her ridge, served as a landmark to both sides.

This was the first time she had had a good look at her new world.

North and south as far as eye could see rolled hills like the one she was throned upon, melting together in the distance. On one side of them the dazzling beach and cobalt sea, on the other bluffs covered with bayberry, dark myrtle green, sloping to salt meadows, which in turn thrust grassy tongues into the blue bay. Strips of marshy islands streaked the bay and a low gray margin far away was the Mainland. She sat facing the bay. Here at her right Blue Heron Village was strung out between a water-tank on four stilts and the Life Saving Station flag on three-stilts-and-a-pole. The Life Saving Station was the nearest building, and Cap'n Price's house with a few old willow trees around it was down this way from the village, nearer the bay and the dock.

To the south lay a tract of unsettled land rolling away in tall thickets of bayberry brush and moss-covered hummock and hollow. At some distance stood a clump of tall old pines, dead and brown at their tops. They clus-

tered round a house, bare and gray except where a patch of the wall had been painted a darker color. Past this she could trace the railroad tracks and the auto boulevard to where, way beyond, a spectral city glimmered in the lower sky, a real city, Roger said—Montague Beach where Dan went every day to build the pier.

She could see Roger over on the point. Beyond him, this side of some little green islands in the bay, a sail was threading its way. For boats were out. It was now May and the boat-sheds stood empty of the mysterious great cocoons which had lain within all winter. These had spread their wings over the water:—sloops, yachts (catboats), sharpies, skiffs, sneakboxes, garveys, bank-skiffs. The chug of motor engines was heard upon the bay and soon many houseboats would moor themselves along the meadow shore. Stephanie knew nothing yet of boats. But she saw the world spread out before her, blue and white and green; the little sail so near land it seemed almost to be skimming through the grass; Roger, her new friend, who would call to her soon to come and help him in this not-understood but absorbing matter they were working at together.

A brisk salt breeze bent the grasses around her all one way. She was sitting on the sand and didn't care if it got on her frock. She ran her fingers down into the cool, white stuff and liked the feel of it.

Above the mainland and the bay a delicate cloud spread up the sky like a white aigrette floating there.

"I have never know the world is *schön* like this," she whispered to a passing breeze.

And the *Herr Vater* might arrive here any day!

Roger gave a shout and waved his arms triumphantly.

She knew what it meant:—he had found another stump. Nothing pleased him so much as finding stumps.

She had found one this morning on Grassy Point, in fact had sat down upon it, and was much surprised when Roger declared it was the very thing they were looking for—the landmark indicated in the chart as “Ye Black Oke.”

Then they had skirted across the north end of the village to the beach, where Roger had the previous evening hidden some instruments in a wreck. There she hung her hat on a stake that stood upright in the ground and lo! she had discovered something else.

“Sadie, you’re some mascot,” Roger had declared.

After figuring with a pencil he dragged out the instruments and began the hard task that occupied their morning. Nobody disturbed them. Roger said Blue Heron Village was used to seeing him do queer things.

He had borrowed from Cap’n Price’s tool-house a great assortment of articles:—There was a kind of telescope attached to a brass disk and three legs to stand it on; there was a long chain with iron pins to fasten it down; rods, twine, a tape line; a long-handled spade and Miss Janet’s coal-scoop.

“These are surveying things. I don’t know why Cap’n has them. He keeps ‘em in the shed but never uses ‘em. I know how. Dan showed me.”

Perhaps Roger didn’t know as much as he appeared to, but it made a great impression on his new partner when he squinted through the telescope.

They spent the morning dragging the chain along the beach. At length he said they had measured enough and he drove in a stake. They went back once more to the

bay shore to look for "Ye Sprus" and were called in to dinner.

Before he folded the map to put it in his pocket Roger pointed to the mark N □ P and rapped it with his finger.

"Nothing more to do except find that spruce stump, get a straight line to our stake, divide the distance, measure it off and dig."

They hid the instruments in a clump of bushes while they went to dinner.

No wonder Stephanie appeared sunburned and rumpled at that meal. She had trudged in the soft beach sand for hours and had followed Roger cross lots through swamps and brush. Her shoes had filled up with sand and had needed to be emptied. Her frock was torn, her ribbon lost. And she didn't care!

Once when they sat down to rest on a timber facing the ocean she had said:

"We're *having fun*, yes?"

"Bet your life," said Roger.

And now at four o'clock Roger had found the other stump and was beckoning to her to come and help.

It seemed, however, that measuring across the island was another matter than the open beach. Here were the railroad and the gravel road to cross with ditches on each side of them and then "the mash" and then thickets, vines, and hummocks. The chain hitched itself to roots and formed a permanent attachment for branches and hauled half the island along with it.

"Oh, what's the use? I'm going to pace it off."

By good luck, therefore, assuredly not good guidance,

a certain spot was picked, more because the sand had there been smoothly scraped by freakish winds into a perfect bowl, pure white, round which the gnarled bayberry copse grew close.

The interlopers stood at its brink pressing the branches behind them with their hands. The sun was getting lower and had left this dell. Its rays coppered the opposite bushes at their tops.

Roger said, "This must be the place."

"What you think is here?" whispered Stephanie. Even now she did not wholly understand, though Roger had coached her on many things all day.

"I don't know. We'll dig and see."

He went for the spade and shovel and they stepped down into the middle of the bowl and struck into its smooth surface.

"Ouch, Sadie! Please don't throw sand into my eye. Toss it up on the bank there. S'matter with you, anyway? Hurt yourself?"

"I go only to make a small chop and it hits me by the leg."

"You hold it like a soup-spoon, that's why. Grab it like this."

Down they went through fine dry sand, which poured back continually around their feet, to hard-packed, heavy stuff, and below that it was coarse and damp. Roger fixed some branches against the sides to hold them up, making a sort of well in which they crouched and tossed sand up against the sky.

Stephanie was covered with sand. It was in her eyebrows, on her cheeks and upper lip, behind her ears, and down her neck. Her sweater, skirt, and hair were full

of it. She took bits of it from her tongue with a gritty finger-tip.

"Is it much down deeper, you think?"

"Can't tell. It may not be straight down. We ought to dig a trench fifteen or twenty feet long before we give up hope."

His partner sighed heavily.

"It is almost evening now."

"Yes, but don't stop yet. *I'm* always very thorough."

And just then, as he placed his foot to give a mighty push, the spade grated against something hard.

"What's this!" He thrust in here and there and each time they heard a clinking sound. He dropped on his knees and went at the place furiously with his hands. Stephanie, seeing his excitement, fell to pawing also.

A moment later they had uncovered a smooth gray oblong.

Roger, crouching, brushed it off and felt around the edges.

"It's stone!" He stared at his companion. "I never heard of a treasure chest of stone."

They managed at length to scrape down around the side enough to show the nature of their find. So deep in the ground that the sand they took out moistened the palms of their hands, leaning a little sideways, stood a slab of gray stone with letters carved on it.

"P," read Roger. "And N. Do you know what this is, Sadie?"

"No."

"It's a gravestone."

"A gravestone? As by cemeteries?" Through her mind there flashed a vision of beautiful Woodlawn where

they had motored sometimes. She glanced around at the sandy dell and the gnarled high bushes above it, now full of black shadows. "But who would bury persons here?"

"Pirates would. Tell you what I think, Sadie. There's treasure somewhere under here, or near, but—there's skeletons too."

Her eyes opened wide at him.

"Yes, I didn't tell you about that for fear you'd get nervous and of course I didn't know what we'd strike. But when they buried treasure they most always buried a bunch of people along with it. They thought their ghosts would keep other folks from getting at the treasure. And queer things have happened too. Men would go some lonesome place where they had reason to think pirate stuff was hidden and just as they stuck their spades into the ground strange noises would begin——"

Roger broke off suddenly and at the same moment his companion's fingers closed tight upon his sleeve.

"Hark!"

The sounds they heard were of some one breaking a way softly through the brush behind them.

CHAPTER XV

FIRST FIND

THE first thing Roger and Stephanie did was to scramble out of the little dell into the bushes. But they did not go far for there is nothing like bayberry brush and the dry brown leaves and twigs that fall from it, to produce crackling noises. They crouched in a thicket and dared to go no farther. Stephanie would have floundered to her feet and crashed right on but Roger held her by the tail of her sweater.

Some one was standing at the opposite side of their hollow. A pair of boots and the edge of overalls were visible but they could see nothing more from their position under the bushes. For several minutes the boots stayed planted in the same spot, then they stepped down into the hollow.

Roger swallowed an exclamation. It was Cap'n Price who was bending over what they had uncovered. He was muttering sounds of astonishment.

He had turned his back toward them and stood motionless. Stephanie was afraid of Cap'n at all times and Roger had a real reason for feeling nervous. There on the sand lay Cap'n's new spade, his fifty-yard tape line and Miss Janet's shovel, and back in the bushes was his surveying apparatus. It was all very well to rely on Cap'n's forgetfulness and borrow his things if they could be returned quietly, but Cap'n Price had a stern way at

times and then you remembered that he had once been the head man of all these parts and as captain of the life-saving crew had held a record for swift action.

The map at any rate was not out there. Roger moved his arm to find if it was still under the front of his sweater. This disturbed his balance and he fell over in the crackling brush.

"Who's there?" said Cap'n sharply.

He wheeled around and thrust aside the branches. Roger crawled out. He had brown leaves and prickers sticking to his sweater everywhere and there were twigs in his hair.

"Rawger, is it?" The Cap'n bent his fierce old eagle face upon him and caught him by the shoulder. "How came ye to uncover this?"

"W-w-we dug."

"So I judged. But how'd you get soundings? How'd you lay your course just here?"

"W-w-we measured."

"Yes, I saw my surveyor's outfit back there; you gather those together and I'll see you about that later. But, young man, by what chart did you lay your course? It was no accident that located this monument that's been lost for fifty year."

Cap'n Price spoke rationally and with stern authority. Roger drew out the blue map.

"Cap'n, we found this map."

"Where'd you find this?" shouted the Cap'n after one close look at it.

"In the old safe in the store."

And then nothing more happened for the Cap'n strode off with the map in his hand.

"Come on, Sadie. I guess we better pick things up and go."

Shadows deepened over the gray stone leaning awry in the hollow. So it *was* a monument? A monument that Cap'n Price knew about and seemed disturbed at their finding. In their hearts they knew that they had scarcely expected to find anything and were half-pretending all the time. And here they had unearthed some grown-up secret hidden in the heart of the bluff.

Roger had run up the slope to look around. He exclaimed:

"There's a whole lot of people coming out here!"

He began to gather up their things hurriedly.

"Let's get away. Maybe we've done something against the law."

Many persons were certainly headed this way. In fact the whole village seemed to be straggling along the road and striking off into the bushes toward their excavation.

From a sandhill they saw Cap'n Price coming across-lots with Cap'n Bill Pharo and Cap'n Israel Nummy. Mr. Bissell, the storekeeper, and the crowd of men who occupied a bench every evening in front of his store; Miss Janet and several women; the village boys:—all were on the way. And there was Dan turning off to join them. His sharp eyes made out two figures on a distant rise and he waved his hand but kept right on with the crowd.

So they turned back and found themselves on the edge of the group around their hollow. But they could not get any explanation till Miss Janet caught sight of them and

was instantly reminded that she had left biscuits in the oven.

They followed her, asking questions, and she stopped to help them collect the tripod and chain, and as they went, explained about the gray stone in the bluff.

"It's the old marker that shows the true boundary line between our land and the Newbolds'!"

"But Cap'n said it was a monument," said Roger.

"So it is. They call it the old stone monument and it stands for a vast deal of trouble."

Sixty-five years ago two lads whose fathers owned large tracts of Blue Heron Beach, lived neighbors there and were boon companions. They owned a boat together which they sailed across the bay to attend school on the mainland. They grew up and shipped before the mast on the same vessel, the *Cape May Belle*. Then one of them left the sea and turned home to set up a store in the growing village, marry, become post-master, captain of the life-saving crew, and a leading man along shore. The other followed the sea for twenty years more. By this time, being no spender, he had saved up money, and having married, he too came back to Blue Heron to settle down.

His friend, Aaron Price, had been running two sloops between Great Swallow Bay and northern ports, carrying oysters, fish, and clams. But this extra line of business was more than he could handle and he was trying to dispose of these two boats, the *Lizzie M.* and the *Garland*, just at the time that his old chum, Tom Newbold, came looking for an investment for his savings.

The two old friends got together in the store to talk it over. And lo! they were boy friends no longer but

one the shrewd storekeeper and the other an old crank of a seafaring man who had brought home from his voyages chronic bilious complaint and a stingy disposition.

They quarreled over the purchase money, Cap'n Newbold claiming that the *Lizzie M.* was seam-sprung. He brought over to the store two bags of money, some of it in coins he had hoarded in a stocking on his voyages. The sum fell short of Cap'n Price's estimate on the two vessels and they had another dispute. Cap'n Price said he would take what was offered as part payment.

On her first voyage under the new ownership the *Lizzie M.* foundered in a gale off Sandy Hook and not being insured was a total loss. Cap'n Newbold stormed into Price's store that night, beside himself over this disaster, and demanded his money back, said Cap'n Price had cheated him. Cap'n Price was called away in the midst of this tirade, leaving the complainant alone in the store. A day later he went to his safe:—the money bags were gone.

There was damaging evidence against Cap'n Newbold. Cap'n Price, when he stowed away the money, had exhibited to him his new safe. He rarely used the combination on the outside door, but locked an inner door and hung up the key behind the safe. Cap'n Newbold had watched him do this after he put the money bags inside.

The case was never tried in court but it was tried every day of the year on the store porch, also on the store porches of Tippville, Grassy Run, Cranberry Low Bottom, and every village along shore. Some took one side, some another. Between accuser and accused a

bitter quarrel grew. Cap'n Price had not a doubt that Newbold took the money; Cap'n Newbold declared that Cap'n Price had first sold him an unsound boat and then sought to damage his reputation.

Cap'n Newbold's side was powerful enough to get a rival store established and its owner appointed postmaster in place of Cap'n Aaron Price. Blue Heron was a thriving village then, Montague Beach was not yet built. About that time Cap'n Price lost his wife. The final blow came several years later when his own son died from an injury on the dock which many believed might have been prevented by Cap'n Thomas Newbold.

Meanwhile everything had fed their quarrel. Not a cow wandered over the line, not a clam was taken from the neighboring waters but became an author of bad feeling.

The worst of it was nobody knew where the boundary line really lay. The old map was lost. Both men had heard that a stone monument had been set up at the first survey but it could not be located. First Price had a new survey made, then Newbold. Then they took to measuring and driving stakes themselves. The line finally set by a surveyor from Cape May disagreed with Cap'n Price's measurements and gave the advantage to the other property.

It was now ten years since Thomas Newbold died and his family moved away, carrying the feud with them. They had never sold the land as there was some dispute about their title. Dan Smith had his men quartered in the old weatherbeaten house.

Much of this story Miss Janet told on the way home that night and the rest of it they learned at other times.

By some miracle of chance, certainly not by scientific calculation, they had uncovered the ancient landmark, vagrant winds having prepared the way by scooping out a hollow just above it. Of course they had had the map to go by.

After supper the old man called Roger into his room to question him. Dan was there already, discussing with Cap'n the great event.

"Now, Rawger, what I want to know is, what was your personal interest in finding the old marker. 'Twould have seemed natural if you found, overhauling the old safe, a map like that 'ere that you'd report it, instead of privateering round measurin' off the land yourself."

Cap'n spoke evenly but in a tone that meant business. Moreover, Dan sat there silently waiting for the answer.

"Cap'n, we—I—didn't know what kind of map it was. I thought it meant something else."

"You laid your course by it with the aid of my telescope and line."

"Yes, and I'm sorry, Cap'n, about the tools. I won't take anything out like that again. I'll—I'll save up and pay if anything got damaged."

"There was no damage to speak of," said the Cap'n, his mouth relaxing slightly. "'Twould be amply covered by the salvage anyway. But you say you didn't know what kind of map it was or what importance—and yet you got your bearings from it and headed straight for the spot indicated on the paper here by a square and cross and initials of the interested parties, Price and Newbold. What did you figure them two letters stood for?"

Roger stood by the table fiddling with a piece of bees-

wax Cap'n always kept there in a basket of sewing tackle. He stuck the scissors into it and gouged holes, impaled it on the point and held it near the lamp causing it to melt and give forth strange odors. His brother reached over and seized the offending lump.

"Why don't you answer the Cap'n?"

"Pearls," mumbled Roger. "And—er—nuggets."

"What!"

"We—I—thought the letters stood for—hem!—pearls and nuggets."

"You better speak a little louder, Rawger. Sometimes I run several points off my course 'count of having the wrong ear turned. Now what was it that ye said?"

Roger's face was a fine red in the glow of the lamp. He saw that he must go into explanations.

"Why, Cap'n, it was like this:—I—we—I—thought the map was to show where there was treasure buried. You know—by—by—pirates."

"By who?"

"Pirates."

Cap'n looked round at Dan and then simultaneously they both burst out laughing.

Dan laughed the more heartily because he was glad to see his old friend relax from the strain of this day's work. Cap'n Price had been talking excitedly with many neighbors and reiterating one assertion:—"This proves it. Tom Newbold pried open that safe and stowed the map there when he took my money."

Roger stood waiting for them to get through laughing and he looked very sulky.

"Dan can laugh all he wants to but there did use to be pirates here."

"Now, Rawger, don't ye go to feeling crabbed. I've heard lots of pirate yarns spun in the fo'c'sle and there used to be books about 'em here in my cab'net. I expect those bucks cruised all up and down this shore in my grandfather's time. Maybe they put into Swallow Bay. They might've. On'y I never heerd of it. Never heerd of ary pirate round these parts 'cept this old chap they call Pirate Pinneo, on Crooked Point. Phin Pinneo, he used to was, when he lived below here on Boremus Beach 'n then some summer boarder, I guess, named him pirate, 'count of some yarns they was afloat. He'd steal fish-hooks. He wouldn't had spine enough to take sinkers too. So I always told him. But he's all the pirate we got around here now."

Roger's face did not clear up.

"Psho, boy. I only questioned you to find out what started you on that there hunt. I knew it was just one of your notions swashin' round. And look here." The Cap'n spoke in real earnest. "I've been meaning to tell you; it's a wonderful good turn you've done me to-day. That map's been lost for forty year. Ef 'twas 'mongst my papers here I didn't know it—though *others may have*. But however. You was the clever chap that found it. And you located the monneyment, which surveyors from Cape May or Philadelphia even with the map might have took two or three weeks and run up a bill of three hundred dollars and not found it then. Don't grunt, Dannle. I've had my own experience with these fresh-water engineers. Roger, you're a smart boy for all your notions and I owe you a debt and there's my hand on it."

This turn of the conversation made Roger feel dif-

ferent. Smiling and gratified he shook hands with the Cap'n. Then he bethought him of his partner, whom he had loyally kept out of the matter as long as only blame and ridicule were passing round.

"You know, Cap'n, it wasn't only me found the map or located the treas—I mean the marker. Sadie helped me. In fact, Sadie was the one that first spied the map."

"Sadie?" asked the Cap'n.

"Yes, Sadie Wienerwurst, you know, that lives here."

"Where is she?"

"Sadie," called Roger.

This evening the new boarder had lingered down-stairs after supper and had even asked Miss Janet hesitatingly to let her help with a dish-towel. She hated to go to bed. Everything began to seem different and to-day she was really *in* things here.

She put down the towel and went to the door of Cap'n's room.

"Here she is. Here's Sadie."

"Come here, child," said Cap'n Price.

He waited until she had come quite close to his chair and then he took her by the hand and looked at her long and earnestly.

"What is it Rawger says your name is?"

"S-s-sadie Wienerwurst," said Stephanie trembling.

But the old Cap'n only patted her hand and looked at her questioningly.

"You mightily resemble some one I know—a fine, handsome boy—fine lads, they both was then. He ain't been back just lately, not as I recollect—a good shot, he is. But he never answered to no such name as that 'ere."

Dan was sitting facing the kitchen door. Miss Janet, he saw, had stopped what she was doing to listen to this conversation. At the Cap'n's last speech he saw her suddenly put down the dish she held and hide her face in her apron.

He went out to her. "What's the matter, Miss Janet? Has the fuss over the old trouble been too much for you?"

"No, it isn't that. It's this letter. Neddie Bissell handed it in just after supper."

SURETY AND TRUST COMPANY
New York

13/4/14.

Miss Janet Price,
Blue Heron, New Jersey.

Dear Madam:

I am writing at request of Mr. Alan Rand who sailed yesterday on board yacht *Harpoon*, owned by Mr. Mortimer Van Vorst, for a cruise in sub-arctic waters. Though the trip had been planned for some time the day of sailing was hastened by weather conditions and as Mr. Rand's preparations were hurried he asked me to drop a line to you. He wished me to tell you that matters in which you are particularly interested are satisfactorily settled. There will be no further interference. He begs you to apply at this office for funds needed or any other help. Letters to him will be forwarded by us. He hopes to see you on his return which will be in about six or eight weeks.

Yours very truly,

FRANK C. GOODRICH.

"Only yesterday I wrote another card telling him Stephanie wanted him to come and not to forget woolen socks," faltered Miss Janet. "He hasn't answered half my letters. He doesn't seem to care about the child at all."

"She thinks a heap of him."

"Yes, and he doesn't know that. I wanted him to come and find it out. Sub-arctic regions—I do hope he has not been led to take an interest in the North Pole." Miss Janet bit her lip and folded the letter away in heavy disappointment.

CHAPTER XVI

THE TRUNK IN THE KITCHEN ATTIC

ROGER had his boat, the *Susan R.*, in the water and his first officer, Sadie W., in the stern and was teaching one to sail the other on a fine morning in the latter days of May.

The *Susan R.* was a sneakbox. A sneakbox is a tiny boat, all deck except a little square hatch amidships. In this hatch the voyagers sit with their heads and shoulders sticking up like tulips in a window garden. If you choose to row there are wooden thwarts each side. If you choose to sail, a mast with a sail rolled up on it is lying on the deck, a rudder with ropes in the hold, and you handily reach over from your seat and set them in place without rising. A sneakbox is used by gunners to hide in the sedge and shoot ducks from. Being all deck it is probably the safest small craft afloat and it draws so little water it can sail almost on dry land. The *Susan R.* was not new but she was entirely seaworthy. Dan had bought it for his brother at second hand.

Up and down close to Grassy and Duck Points and in and out among the Little Islands flitted the *Susan's* microscopic sail but not outside in the deep channels yet because of certain conditions laid down by Miss Janet Price, as follows:

They were not to sail beyond Little Islands till the mate had learned to swim.

They might not go out in a naw-east, naw-east by east, east, sou'-east by east, or sou'-east wind.

Said mate must wear a life-preserved. It was tied on outside her middy blouse to-day, a strait-jacket of canvas with vertical strips of cork stitched into it and tapes in front and was the kind Price's store used to keep for sale. In it the wearer found free motion difficult, especially the act of sitting down.

"But I learn well, in spite of all? Yes?" She anxiously inquired.

"Fair, for a girl. A little more to loo'ard now. *Loo'ard!* We want to make that point on the next tack."

"I know 'loo'ard.' You haf no need to shout. I know tack and sprit and gaff and tiller and sheet. I know yacht and sloop and skiff and power-boat and garvey and old mud-scow. I know the face of a crab swimming by the dock and minnow and eel and channel and high tide and breeches-buoy and snapping-turtle. I know bilge-water."

"Oh, you'll do, time you learn to swim. Then us for the deep water before the boarders come."

"Are they then very bad?"

"Bad? They're the worst you ever heard of. There's an old red-nosed gink from Trenton that spreads a handkerchief over his face and takes a nap on the veranda outside my room every afternoon. There's a lady from Philadelphia that has a little table in the dining-room by herself for fear she might have to speak to somebody that lives north of Market Street. And an old cat, Mrs. Piffington, from Paterson. And the Bradshaw family from Camden—five kids all under nine and red-haired. The largest boy is eight. Well, the way

he sticks to me! He's a goose. Every minute or so he says to his mother, 'Mah-mah! What day is this? Is it to-day or is it to-morrow?' Whatta you know about that? They've got a baby now, that'll probably get hold of things and put 'em in its mouth. And you can't get away from 'em to save your life."

"In my room I could go."

"Twouldn't do a bit of good. Those kids'll chase right after you. No, the only escape for us is this old *Susan* and then put the big channel between us and them."

Stephanie had not half recounted the sum of her new acquirements.

She knew how to climb off the slippery rafters of the dock and drop into the *Susan* just as the boat swung round. She could bale with an old tin can and swab down the decks with a gritty bit of sponge. She could step the mast and set the rudder and be ready in her place when Roger cast off and shouted "Let her go!" She knew the way out of Heron Cove between the Point and the boats anchored nearby. Cap'n Bill Pharo's *Wagtail* and the *Ada* belonging to young Benjamin Nummy were the finest yachts (catboats), and there were all sorts besides. She knew them each by name and could have told you that a scrap of white a mile away was Si Scupper's skiff bound for Punkin Run or that a distant chug-chug came from Bissell's motor out in the beach channel.

Already she had learned what the edge of the bay looked like at low tide, skirting it barefoot with a crab-net over her shoulder. The points stood high and dry, all rippled, greenish sand, dented with puddles full of eelgrass and black snail-shells. At water's edge an eelgrass forest sheltered the water creatures in its close

arcades. The black mud oozed between her toes and she liked it. She was afraid of nothing along shore but the spotted toadfish with his wide, wide mouth and ugly eyes.

She knew the surf too, the white sands dotted with broken shells and clots of sea grass; the green breakers, curling, thumping, breaking in a mass of foam which rushed and hissed along the beach; the looks of different kinds of ships that rode on its blue breast. There had been days warm and calm enough for her first swimming lessons, when Dan routed them out in the early morning and coaxed her into waves lovely with pink sunrise light.

She was acquainted with the life-saving crew, called them "Jake" and "Perry" and could tell Miss Janet that they were going to have fish chowder for supper at the station-house. She knew when Mrs. Bill Pharo was frying doughnuts and she dared press her nose against that stout friend's kitchen screen provided Roger was along to do the talking, for Miss Janet had told him she didn't want Sadie to answer questions about her former home.

She knew Mr. Ed Bissell, the storekeeper, old Cap'n Israel Nummy, Hosy Tonkins, the Pharos, the Crammers, and what relation they were to each other. She knew how soon the so-called hotel would open, who owned the little shut-up cottages. She knew what kind of candy and gum you could get at Bissell's. She knew when trains were due. She had been to Montague Beach.

The people of Blue Heron village were used now to *her* and had accepted her as "that new girl tew Cap'n Aaron's that talks funny and is kinda bashful."

Stephanie was "up" in another new line:—She was

making oral acquaintance with a great variety of boy's stories, especially those of pirates, they being Roger's specialty. He was keeping his promise to "help her education along."

And so New York, the Juilliard, the Fräuleins, Tante, became dim things of the past. Only of *Herr Vater* she thought daily, in the first hours of waking and at nights after the lamp was out. Her thoughts were sad with disappointment now for Miss Janet had broken the news as gently as she could.

"Your papa won't come as soon as we hoped, dear. He's gone on a trip."

Stephanie's face grew long. She knew what that meant far better than Miss Janet. Had there not been weeks and months in New York when *Herr Vater* did not visit the Juilliard because he was away on a trip, yachting or traveling?

"Yes, it will be very long before he come," she said woefully.

However, she was not thinking of this in the *Susan R.* this sparkling morning.

They could see all their part of the island—the houses, the roads, the uncleared tract.

"I say! There goes Cap'n with two more fellows from the city out to see our stone. They must have gotten off the 10.15."

"How much persons is that, Roger, who come to see?"

"Let me think." Roger counted on his fingers. "There was the justice of the peace and another man from Montague and that lawyer and two fellows from the Land Company and two men that the Newbolds sent

and a surveyor from Cape May and this makes ten. Besides everybody in Cranberry County, more'n I can count. All to see what we dug up with our little shovels."

"It was hard—the digging," said Stephanie reminiscently.

"Yes, and some job to measure. Good joke on the surveyors that Cap'n had before that a chap like me went out and struck the spot first time."

"Yes, we measure well, exceedingly. And then we find that sandy place and you say, 'This must be the spot.'"

"My! wasn't I excited though, when my spade grated on something hard?"

"We uncover all the sand from him quick and you say, 'It is a monument.' And Cap'n that night is very please."

"'Course he is when it gives him forty feet of land and proves he was right about the boundary. I tell you we did Cap'n Price one good turn."

This dialogue goes to show that the finders of the old landmark had become somewhat conceited and complacent over that day's work.

"But, Sadie," went on Roger, turning to look farther downshore toward the big pines. "What I want now and what we set out for in the first place is to do as good a turn to Dan."

"Indeed, I like to turn my giant most well of all," declared the mate earnestly.

"Yes, because look here:—Dan's worried about something now. He gets letters from Brother Morwood that make him blue and grouchy. It's some fuss about the

work here and this crew. They're a bad lot, anarchists or something, and some way they make trouble for Dan up at the office, pass the word they aren't treated right, and the work isn't going well, and they don't like their quarters—at the old Newbold place, you know, that sort of rickety-looking gray house by the pines, with front door painted blue. The thing is, I heard Dan tell Miss Janet, they want to be down at Montague near the hotels and saloons. Sunday he heard some of 'em had been making a rumpus in town and he went down there and never got back till after midnight. I wouldn't go to sleep till he came in—sat up and read. My, but I was glad to hear him tramp along the porch!"

"They dare not hurt Dan?"

"Might, or he might hurt them and get in wrong about it. You see one trouble with my brother Dan is, he's such a whale for strength. He'll go to gently push a fellow, maybe, and first thing he knows he's knocked him down and broke his nose. Then when Morwood hears of it he says Dan meant to do it and there's a row. Brother Morwood's suspicious of everybody, thinks they're going to trick him. He's always watching out for Dan to do something because—I don't know as you ever heard? Dan ran away once when he was a boy?"

"Yes, I know," said Stephanie, looking the other way. Her big friend's story that evening on the gallery, had impressed her so deeply that she didn't want to talk about it.

"Do you? I've scarcely heard all about it myself. But d'you know what I think sometimes? Morwood said before we came down here that if there were any

rows or trouble this time he and Dan would part. That would mean I couldn't be with him either. And if Morwood fired him do you know what I'm afraid Dan would do? *Run away again.*"

Roger looked very troubled over this secret dread of his.

"And so I do wish we could turn up something that would help Dan and fix him independent. It seems as if we might. Look what we found already and how important it was. Well, we examined everything in that old safe. Where else could we look?"

The mate thought awhile. "In the *Admiral Benbow* Hotel it is in a chest upstairs they find things."

Only last week she had heard this story with profound interest.

"Well, there ain't any chests at Price's. Wait though! There are a lot of trunks in the kitchen attic along with junk out of the old store. And some of the trunks have things in left behind by boarders, long-time-ago boarders that came here to shoot ducks. Maybe—Sadie, don't say another word but come about on the next tack and head for home. I've got a thought."

That night Miss Janet said to the giant:

"Daniel, your brother is certainly developing wonderfully of late. He left his play to-day and followed me about with offers of assistance, I suppose because he saw I was extra busy preparing for the boarders. It is a pleasure to see the dear boy's character shaping itself so nobly."

"Or else he's got an ax to grind," laughed the Big Boss.

Miss Janet did not think to mention some puzzling questions the helpful lad had asked.

"Miss Janet, you never had a fellow staying here that drank and swore constantly and seemed to have a secret on his mind, did you?"

"Merciful heavens, Roger! We would not allow such characters inside our doors, not for one night even," the good lady cried.

"Well, he might not have drank so much but kept off by himself and acted mysterious and went out snooping in the bushes sometimes."

"Not that I recollect, my dear."

"But—wasn't there any boarder that dropped dead in a way nobody understood, leaving all his things behind in a chest or something?"

"My dear Roger! What ideas you do have in your head! None of our boarders ever died, though some are particularly injudicious in their appetite for seafood. If you mean gunners, they go out on the point, or in boats, and not in the bushes. There is, however, in the kitchen attic an old trunk full of things they've left behind at one time or another. I always notified the parties but generally they were old hats or boots and they said keep them till they came next time. Some of the articles have been there for years."

"Miss Janet, you wouldn't mind if I sort of looked over that trunk, would you?"

"Certainly not. It's in the corner behind the chimney. You're welcome to anything you find there. I've not opened it in years."

Miss Janet was rather surprised at the sudden way in which at this moment her new helper vanished.

Stephanie rocked on the gallery in lonely state that afternoon and wondered if her playfellow had deserted her.

At the supper-table, however, he made some strange signs to her. She was filled with curiosity.

"I've found it," he drew her into the entry to whisper afterward. "And it's a *cryptogram!*"

CHAPTER XVII

CHART NUMBER TWO

FOR four days Roger acted in a way that tantalized Stephanie almost beyond what she could bear.

The first two days he spent all his time expecting a package by mail. After it came he retired into his room and showed himself only at meal times. He then appeared with a pencil over one ear and a preoccupied eye behind his glasses.

“ Highness, are you hypnotizing Roger, or anything? You stare him out of countenance every meal and he seems to be in a trance. This is four times I’ve asked him for the sugar. What’s more he sleeps with several standard authors and all kinds of paper and pencils in his bed.”

“ Dan, if you go monkeying with my things!” barked Roger.

To Stephanie when she waylaid him on the stairs he would only say, “ Wait till I’m ready.”

“ But, Roger, what is it you have said you find?”

“ Sh! I found what we wanted to find. But it’s a cryptogram.”

“ But what is a cryptogram?”

“ A cryptogram is a cipher.”

“ Aber, Roger, what is a cipher?”

“ Oh, nothing. You wait till I’m all ready.”

And sure enough when she looked up cipher in the dictionary it *was* nothing.

"A figure signifying zero, or nothing."

At that Stephanie gave up the subject and almost forgot about it, learning to help Miss Janet with the cooking.

The fifth morning, however, Roger appeared in the kitchen and saying:

"Miss Janet, if you would please be so kind as to excuse Sadie for a few minutes I have something very important to talk to her about, down at the dock in my boat," turned and "strode away" like a moving picture hero who has just uttered an ultimatum.

Miss Janet was so startled that she said:

"Hurry, dear. Don't stop for anything. I hope Roger isn't ill; he looks flushed."

Under the dock in the shade of its mossy green timbers the *Susan R.* sagged back and forth on the ebb tide. Stephanie climbed down three slippery rounds and dropped in beside Roger. He had a book and papers spread out on the stern deck and was sitting on his heels with his elbows on the coaming, studying these documents.

It was a still warm day of early June. From the shade of the dock they could look out over the glassy bay, which grew so pale in the distance that a faraway strip of water with a motionless sail on it seemed to be up in the sky. The air smelled of water-soaked rafters, deep sea mud, salt meadows and bayberry thickets baking in the sun. Nobody was astir, for all the yachts were out and Blue Heron children were at school.

Stephanie seated herself in the boat and Roger gathered up his documents and turned to face her. He had

on his spectacles and he looked like a preacher as he began to hold forth.

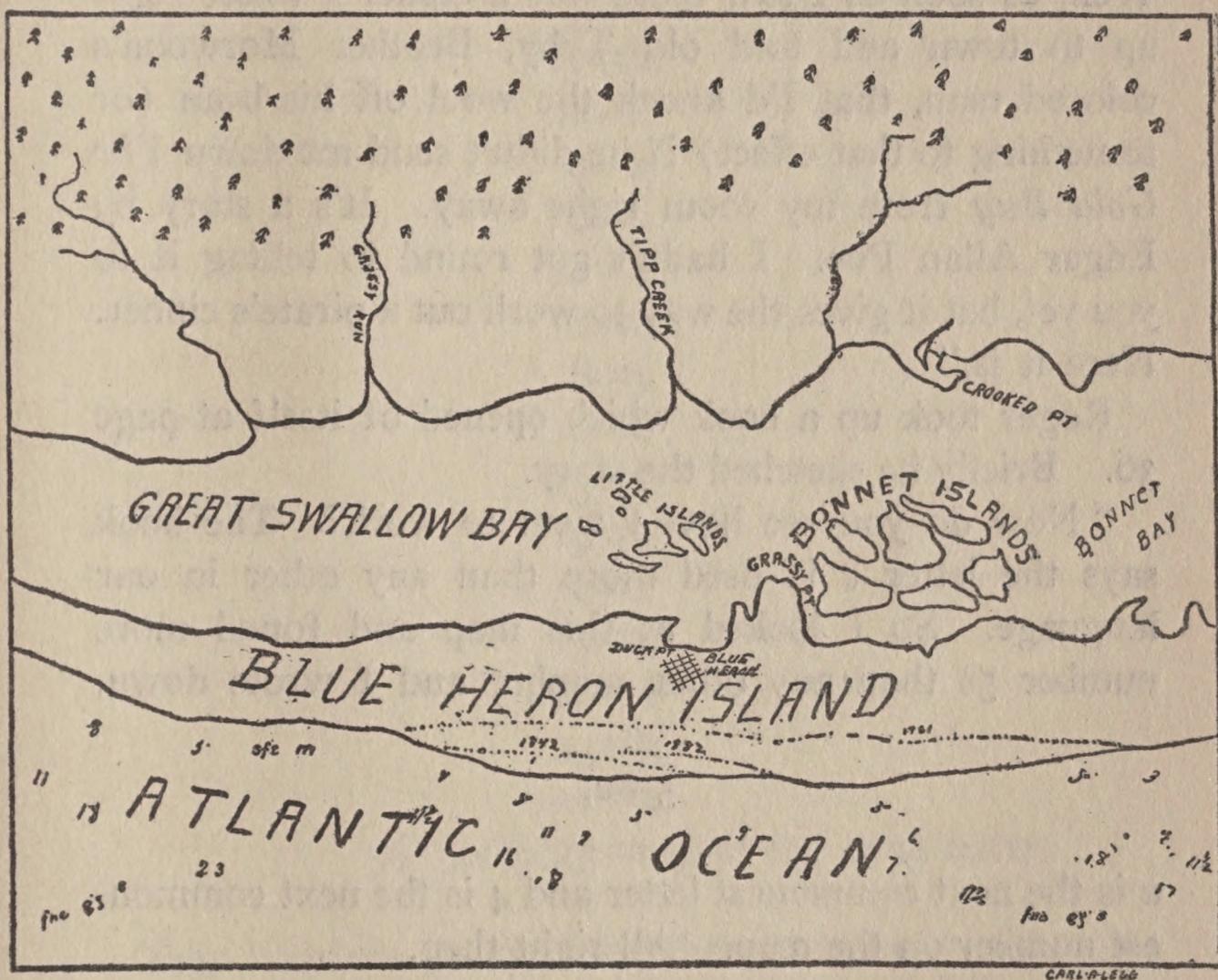
" You want to listen well, Sadie, for this is a long, complicated thing and it's going to be no cinch making you understand. It was your idea looking in a trunk; I give you the credit of that. But of course you couldn't have worked out a cryptogram.

" Well, Miss Janet couldn't give me any kind of a clue on her boarders but you know how Miss Janet is:—if Blackbeard himself came to stay here she'd say he seemed a well-meaning sort of man. She did acknowledge, though, that there was a trunk in the kitchen attic left behind by boarders—gunners mostly. Now gunners are an awful tough-looking set; they might be mixed up in any shady kind of business. So I looked that trunk over thoroughly, and it was full of boots and old novels and I was just thinking, *Nothing doing*, when I noticed a kind of flap-pocket inside the top tray and I opened it and—found this:"

He handed Stephanie a map. It was sketched with ink of different colors on heavy paper and labeled, as she saw in a moment, with familiar names—Great Swallow Bay, Grassy Point, Little Islands, Blue Heron Village, even the Life Saving Station was down. Speckled places showed where there were meadows, and a patch of Japanese looking marks evidently indicated the big pines. There were other lines that she did not understand, with dates 1761, 1882, 1842. The ocean too had speckled areas and was dotted with numbers, 5, 6, 18, 7, 11, and groups of letters *sft m, fne gy s.*

Roger waited but a moment for his partner to study these features.

" You see it's a map of right here—not an old one, because the words are all spelled right—for it shows the village and the railroad. But that doesn't hurt any, for they must have copied an old chart and brought it up to date. Now, you observe that the ocean is all numbers and letters? Don't you? "



" Yes, I observe," said Stephanie, deeply engaged by Roger's manner.

" Well, what do you think they stand for? "

She thought hard and timidly suggested, " Fishes? "

" Pshaw! But of course I couldn't expect you to understand. As soon as I noticed those letters and

numbers I sung out 'Here we are!' For I knew it was a cipher. A cipher, Sadie, is a private way of telling a secret so nobody will understand. I don't mean *nobody* but only those that are in on it already, unless some guy like me comes along that's read a lot and can use his brains when he wants to and he unravels the thing. Well, as soon as I saw there was a cipher I wrote right up to town and told old Toby, Brother Morwood's colored man, that I'd knock the wool off his bean (or something to that effect) if he didn't send me down *The Gold Bug* from my room right away. It's a story by Edgar Allan Poe. I hadn't got round to telling it to you yet, but it gives the way to work out a pirate's cipher. Here it is."

Roger took up a book which opened of itself at page 36. Briefly he sketched the story.

"Now do you see how I went to work? The book says the letter *e* is used more than any other in our language. So I looked at this map and found more number 5s than any other number and I wrote down,

$$5=e,$$

a is the next commonest letter and 4 is the next commonest number on the map. All right then,

$$4=a$$

And so I worked along till I had made a little table. And here it is."

Stephanie took the scrap of paper he handed her. Perhaps she expected a picture of a piece of furniture

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with a flat top and four legs. But this was "the little table."

5=e
4=a
6=o
3=i
7=d
17=h
16=n
9=r
10=s
11=t
18=u
8=y
12=c
13=f
19=g
14=l
15=m
20=w
23=b
21=k

$\frac{1}{2}$ probably=repeat the same letter.

Take numbers grouped together to make words. *fne*
gy s and *sft m* must be some kind of special directions.

While his pupil studied this Roger sped on:

"I took the numbers near together and wrote letters over 'em and say! They do make words. Spelled wrong, of course, but you know I told you pirates were apt to do that—even Shakespeare. So I pieced them together

but I had to guess what *fne* and those other bunches of letters stand for. But it didn't bother me much; the meaning simply jumped at me after I got going. Everything jibed dandy and here's the whole thing worked out. And it sorta rhymes, even. When I noticed that I said to myself, that settles it. Look."

4-11 ½=a-t-t

23-14-18=b-l-u

7-6-9-5=d-o-r-e

17-18-11 ½-5=h-u-t-t-e

fne stands for face north east.

gy s stands for get your (gun, of course) shoot!

11-18-9-16=t-u-r-n

11-18=t-u

9-3-11 ½=r-i-t-t

sft m=seek for treasure (by)
moonlight.

Total Result

Att blu dore hutte

Face northeast. Get your (gun). Shoot!

Turn to ritt

Seek for treasure (by) moonlight.

"Well, what do you think of it?"

Stephanie had everything spread out on her lap and she looked first at the map and then at Roger's scribbles, with her forehead creased like an old shoe.

"But, Roger," she said at last. "I did think you may-be find something which tells us about digging treasures for my giant up."

Roger made a gesture of despair. "Well, what else have I been chewin' about for the last hour? There is the chart in front of you. And that paper of mine gives exact directions."

"To dig treasures? How? This is a language unknown to me."

"Look at it again. H-u-t-t-e spells hut. In fact I think it's French for that. A hut's a house, isn't it? And blu is just an old style, Shakespeare way of spelling blue. Where do we know a hut, or house, with blue doors that you must've seen as you went to Montague on the train?"

Light dawned on Stephanie. "The bunkhouse!"

"Sure. Now, see what it tells us to do:—From the front doors of the bunkhouse fire a gun northeast and turn to the right. Then we go back by moonlight and there will be a peculiar shadow or something to show the exact spot. It's simple enough."

"But—" said Stephanie dubiously.

"You always begin every sentence with *but*, or what's that word?—'obber.'"

"Yes, Roger. *Aber—*"

"There you go. What's 'obber' mean anyhow?"

"What I mean to say is, is it not then this bunkhouse which Dan says, 'Never go there'?"

"There. I knew you'd be fussing about that. Of course he said we weren't to go when the men were there, but we'll go first in the daytime when they're all at work, and the spot we're looking for is a gunshot away toward the ocean, and that's quite far, and when we go back by moonlight we won't disturb them in the least. And if Dan knew we'd actually got hold of a thing like

this cipher and worked it out he'd see the importance of the thing. And it's for him we're doing it. And what's more, Sadie, you can see by that map that somebody's been after it before, in 1761, 1842, and 1882. Probably one of the original pirate crew came in 1761 and then the chart was carried off round the world by a sailor and as he was going to die he handed it to a friend who came back here in 1842. Somehow the first chart which was on parchment, of course, and in invisible ink, was destroyed, but somebody had made a copy and he came here, disguised as a gunner, to Price's, where he gave up in despair and left this chart behind. And he may be living yet, and mark my words—if we don't dig that money up he'll be round after it."

Stephanie gathered the papers together at once.

"So—— If that is true I think we should get one gait on us."

In spite of objections from Miss Janet, Stephanie picked up from Roger many expressions like the foregoing.

"My dear love, is that the way your teacher taught you to speak?"

"No, Miz Chanet, but I would learn the good English to spik and surprise my *Herr Vater* when he come. Any way I *lieber* spik as Roger than as Fräulein Hammer-schlag."

CHAPTER XVIII

SECOND EXPEDITION AND SECOND FIND

BLUE HERON ISLAND lay hot and sleepy in the afternoon sun. Roger and Stephanie went down along the surf and when they reached a place where the sand was all trodden in footprints, showing that many persons had turned in toward the sandhills at that point, they left the beach and followed. The shoe marks were large and deep—made by the men of Dan's crew, the same whom Stephanie had seen getting off from the train the night Miss Janet came.

She had scarcely seen them since. They went back and forth between Montague and their quarters in the old Newbold house. They did not trouble Blue Heron Village, and the Newbold tract was forbidden ground to Stephanie and Roger because of these very men.

Nevertheless, here they were following a path that wound back among the sandhills, over a bluff and down between high bushes to the forbidden house.

"I didn't know the men went this way so much. I thought they used the road."

"How still it is here. *Pfui!* It gives bad smells and so much tins and bottles."

"I hope nobody's round—but they aren't, of course; they're a mile and a half away. You're right about smells. Phew! Here's the old house. Yes, they're all away."

All was quiet save the wind in the warm pine tops. Soft clouds sailed in a summer sky up there but it seemed to Stephanie that they sped faster over this spot where she now stood, the sooner to leave it behind them.

The old house which had once been pretentious for a beach farm, with double verandas and steps on the north side to wide front doors, was all in disarray—windows broken or stuffed with rags, chimneys tottering, railings draped with dirty clothes and blankets. All around the house and back under the bushes the sand was covered with tin cans, bottles, clam and oyster shells, papers, garbage, over which buzzed bluebottle flies. At the approach of the children some rats scuttled off into the brush.

"I don't like it here," declared Stephanie, holding her nose.

"'Tis rather messy. Dan's tried and tried to make them keep it clean and that's one of the things they hate him for."

"You say we come back here by nights?"

"No, we don't come near the house but northeast, wherever our tag falls. This gun shoots a hundred yards and that'll be way out on the beach, I think. Of course I wouldn't bring you round this joint after dark. Dan wouldn't like that at all."

Nor would Dan like them to be here this afternoon, they both knew well. At the sound of something slamming they started violently, but it was only the breeze flapping a broken shutter.

By some freak in the taste of the late Thomas Newbold his front doors had been painted a bright blue. They were nailed shut and their color stood out from the rest

of the house, which was gray. The visitors picked a gingerly way between cans and bottles to the front steps; Roger took a position directly in the middle of the doors, located nor'east by his compass, pointed the gun (rather shakily) in that direction, and fired.

At its loud roar they fled, by one impulse, kicking and stumbling against tin cans and tripping over vines. It was like escaping from a mouldy cellar to find themselves on the clean white beach once more.

Then they began to look for what had been fired from the gun.

Roger had packed a cartridge for this purpose. Into its open end on top of powder and shot he had stuffed a blue rag weighted with shot. Why a blue one? Were they not on *Blue Heron Island*, directed by a map containing figures on a *blue* background to a "*Blu dore hutte*"?

Was there any significance in the fact that, just as they spied their scrap, the wind caught and *blew* it nimbly over the beach? They ran and it seemed to wait for them and then fluttered away just as their fingers reached for it. At last it caught in the timbers of the big wreck.

This landmark was the skeleton of a good-sized ship, with a double row of black ribs sticking up out of the sand like the legs of some colossal beetle. The bow end pointed south and had some of the deck and sheathing still upon it.

The blue rag caught on an iron spike.

Roger panted, "Don't touch it!" He tied it fast to the spike. "But did you see where it started from before the wind took it?"

"I think near that seaweed."

"No, it was further in, by those clumps of grass."

"Perhaps before we look it blows some, already."

"Yes, that's so. Beans! How are we to tell? I think this cipher's awfully indefinite."

He pulled the papers out of his pocket and looked them through.

"At blu dore hutte
Face northeast. Get your (gun). Shoot!
Turn to ritt
Seek for treasure by moonlight."

"It doesn't say a thing about what to do in case of a southwest breeze," said Roger disgustedly.

They finally marked all three places—the bunch of seaweed, the tufts of grass, and the spikes in the old wreck.

"Must we then dig in these all places?"

"No, I don't think so, because when we come at night and turn to the right we'll get some sign from the moonlight."

"You speak verses, Roger, as poet Heine."

"Heiney? I don't know him. But I'll tell you what I do think:—the treasure's in that old wreck. I believe it's the wreck of a Spanish galleon. Now we better get back before time for Dan."

Roger was anxious to set Dan's shotgun back in its accustomed place, for while his brother allowed him free use of a certain small rifle, he was not supposed to handle the larger gun.

They waited for two evenings but a film of cloud spread over the sky after sunset. Then came a bright clear evening and a half moon that Roger said would do.

Dan had gone away, up to the city, the day before. Miss Janet started for the post-office and was going from there to see Mrs. Hosy Tonkins' sick baby. Cap'n dozed in his room.

A clear coast, literally. The tide was dead low and the surf whispered softly so far out that a strip of tide beach lay bare, as wide as Fifth Avenue, hard enough to run on, yet springy to the feet—finer than any boardwalk south of Sandy Hook.

"I am never before out nights wizout electricity. So much stars but they and the moon make such a little bit of light! How black it look in those sandhills."

As they went farther from home and the lamp-lit windows of Blue Heron were lost behind sandhills it did seem lonely. Three Bar Light was behind them. They went slowly, stopping every now and then to get their bearings. They passed the place of many footprints and were some distance south of it before suspecting their mistake. So they crossed to the foot of the shadowy dunes and groped their way to the wreck. There Roger had stowed away two new shovels bought for this purpose at Bissell's store.

"Turn to ritt
Seek for treasure (by) moonlight."

They turned to the right, east, west, north, south, from each of the marked spots and peered groundward for a sign.

"What for sign shall it be?" Stephanie had asked.

"Oh, a shadow of something—a skull or crossed bones or a yard-arm like they used to hang chaps from."

Stephanie did not see any of these things but she began to feel very nervous about every black patch and object on the beach and to have a notion that something was coming out of those deep glades in the hills which might catch at her ankles from behind.

"Why do you come just where I do? Why don't you turn to the right by yourself? We've got this whole beach and the wreck to dig over and not much time and the most punk directions to go by that ever were. I don't see why they took the trouble of putting it in cipher; it doesn't tell anything. Now you look over there to the right of that hummock."

"*Aber*, I don't like to look wiz myself. What is that thing which sits behind the hummock?"

Roger marched over to look.

"Pshaw! It's a golden-rod plant."

"Well, it gives also a long black thing on the ground. Wiz a strange tail."

"Piece of board and some trash washed up on it."

"Hark! what is that?"

This time it was no fancy. From the direction of the surf the sea breeze brought a sound of low, gruff voices.

Stephanie grabbed at Roger's sleeve, thinking of pirates, dead or alive. But Roger's heart stood still for another reason.

"It's the men. Quick—let's hide!"

The nearest refuge was the bow end of the wreck and they scuttled into its shadow.

Enough of the quarter and counter timbers was left to make sheltering walls which cast a deep shadow northward. Outside the old hull a heap of planks had been

thrown down by some one gathering driftwood. Inside the inclosure was a sloping floor of fine soft sand which they crowded upon. The voices were slowly coming nearer.

"I didn't think they'd be up this time of night. Dan said they went to bed by eight. They've been in town against orders again and they went along the surf for fear of getting caught. Never mind. They'll cross the beach way down and then we'll beat it. Don't you be afraid!"

The oncomers' route across the sand was not so far distant after all, for a moment later the voices were close by, and then they had stopped only a few yards away and their words were audible.

"'Tain't so late."

"No. Whatsa use of goin' in? We can talk better here."

"Some bloke might come along."

"What of it? He's off, to-night, and the rest's asleep. Come over by that heap o' timber."

There in the dark each of the hidden ones knew that the other must have a thumping heart and cold hands and a face screwed up stiffly, as they heard the three men walk close and drop down on the pile of driftwood, with only the old ship's timbers between. Stephanie knew they were disobeying Dan and Miss Janet too and that these were rough men who talked loud and rudely. Roger knew this and that Dan would "give it to him" for planning this expedition, and besides all this, as he listened, a new fear slowly wakened in him at their words.

Stephanie could scarcely understand a single phrase.

But Roger understood well enough to piece out of their dock and alley slang its real purport.

Stephanie heard him draw his breath sharply. It seemed as if the men would smoke their pipes and talk forever. She grew tired of squatting on her ankles and tried to move a little but Roger pinched her arm. What were they quarreling about? "That sneak." "That d—n spy." "Keeping honest men out of their rights." "Break his head." She felt pricklings in her toes. She wanted to sneeze. At last they were getting to their feet, knocking their pipes against the big timbers close to two unseen heads. They stood a minute, seemed to conclude some plan, then strolled away.

"Quick!" said Roger. Two hunched-up, spidery shapes dodged out of the shadow and skimmed across the beach.

"Hi! Who's there?" shouted one of the men. He explained to the others, "I thought I saw something go over that ridge toward the ocean."

Roger and Stephanie heard the shout and their hearts seemed to turn over. Their feet beat on the sand as they panted along and once or twice they almost fell face downward.

No light ever twinkled brighter than the Life Saving Station windows. The fugitives turned in toward them and how good it seemed when they were close enough to look in and see some of the crew sitting there playing checkers.

They leaned against the iron fence, breathing hard.

"Did you hear? Did you hear what those—those liars were talking? You didn't? Well, I could understand well enough after a minute and they were fixing

up something against Dan—— Yes, sir, *my brother Dan!* They're going to get him alone some night and all pitch on him. They said the rest of the crew would fall in line if they 'stood the booze.' I didn't quite get the hang of it but they said if he got funny with them they could get him in wrong with the old man—that's Morwood, of course, and it shows they know how things are between Dan and him. There was a lot about workingmen's rights, and they called Dan names that made me want to yell. I'd like to go back there and smash their heads. Sadie, Dan said he *might* come back to-night if his friends from Montague offered him a lift in their car. Supposing he should stop at the quarters? Supposing he's there now? If they pitched onto him what could we do?"

"I don't know," whimpered Stephanie.

"Hullo!" a big voice called close by.

They ran forward, saw a tall man coming across lots toward them and rushed upon him.

"Dan, when'd you come? You didn't go to Montague? Don't go down there, Dan, will you? Promise you won't go down the road after dark? Dan, promise!"

"Mine Giant, we have a such times. Ach, it was bad! So much mens and my heart beats and they are bad men and Roger says you must not go wiz them."

Dan stood motionless a moment and then turned on his heel and said, "Come along up to the house."

His tone was short but they were so glad to be with him that they crowded on each side, though they had to trample into the high grass to keep abreast.

He went straight home and into the empty, lighted

kitchen, where he lit his pipe and sat down, facing them.

"Now suppose you two open up to me about this."

"Listen, Dan. You stay away from the pines and don't go that way after dark, not on your life, or if you do, take Cap'n Bill and Hi Crammer with you with pistols. The best thing would be to get the whole bunch into jail, first thing to-morrow morning. There's a jail on the mainland, isn't there? Or a box-car would do. You could load 'em in and couple onto the 9.45. Any-way promise you won't go alone, Dan. Promise."

The giant pointed to two chairs opposite him.

"Explanations first. Where've you two been to-night?"

"Down on the beach—a ways."

"How far?"

"Far as—well, the big wreck."

"Right opposite the quarters. Hm! Well, it's a fine night for a stroll. I came down by auto. Found my roommate missing and then noticed the south chamber door open and the room empty. Over at Tonkins' Miss Janet said you were both in bed. I didn't dispute her but began looking round a little and it was an hour before I heard your voices down by the station-house. Do you take these moonlight runs often?"

"Don't get mad, Dan. I know you told us not to go near the crew. But we didn't go near 'em—they came near us. Besides, I was sure they always went to bed early. I saw Tony Feraro with his nightcap on one night from the road sticking it out of the window when it wasn't even dark," Roger explained faster and faster. "But this was Murphy, Dan, and a man they called Tug,

and Jake Ohlen, and they're a bad lot. They called you stingy cuss, and worse than that, and they're going to get the other men in, and, Dan, you won't go down there any night, will you?"

"Speak slow and tell me what all this is about? Murphy and Jake Ohlen! How came you to hear any talk of theirs?"

Roger recounted what he had heard.

"They say," he ended, "they've got you either way, for if you are too much for 'em and do any damage they have a fellow at the office that'll report and make you a lot of trouble with the old man—Brother Morwood, they mean, don't they?"

Dan flushed angrily at this last. He sat smoking in silence and staring into space for what seemed to the children an endless time. At last he glanced at them and their anxious brows cleared a little, as they caught the quizzical gleam in his black eyes.

His voice however was sharp and brisk:

"Now tell me what you went down there for anyway."

"Well, Dan, you know what a really important thing we did finding that monument? I suppose nobody would ever have located it if we hadn't gone systematically to work. It made me feel sure this old house ought to be thoroughly searched——"

"For more monuments?"

"No, for papers—that is, a certain kind of paper. You know what I mean, Dan, and you needn't laugh and snort for you don't know at all what I've read in the public library about pirates—yes, sir—hiding down around here and of course they must have buried stuff

and then drew a chart and that's what I was looking for, and so when I came across a queer map in a trunk in the kitchen attic——”

“Kitchen attic! Pshaw! I thought of course it was handed to you by a one-eyed stranger who had it as the last bequest of a dying sailor man homeward bound from Brazil on a brig called *Nellie*. ”

“Quit your kiddin’, Dan. This is the real thing this time and I guess you’ll admit that much when I show you the cipher, made in figures all over the ocean and the way it works out in poetry and everything. I solved it my own self.”

“No? What does it say?”

Roger stuffed a hand into his pocket and pulled out a package of papers.

“This is the answer and all worked out,

‘At blu dore hutte
Face northeast. Get your (gun). Shoot!
Turn to ritt,
Seek for treasure (by) moonlight.’

A hut’s a house, isn’t it? And a house we know of has blue doors. Now whatta you know about that?”

Certainly the giant had the air of a person deeply impressed. He looked from one of his companions to the other.

“Would you mind letting me see your documents, old chap?”

Roger handed the papers over and Dan took them and spread them out on the table in the lamplight. The children came close also.

"This is the important paper?"

"Yes."

The giant scrutinized it long and closely. Then he examined all the scraps of paper on which Roger had figured out his code.

He went back to the chair with the map in his hand and lit his pipe afresh.

"Where did you say you found this, Boxer?"

"In the kitchen attic in a trunk of things left behind by boarders."

"Ha. And what gave you the idea of a cipher?"

"Oh, most pirate charts are in cipher. In *The Gold Bug*—"

"Oh, yes, *The Gold Bug*. It's some years since I read that but wasn't there a parchment and some kind of fading ink and skulls dangling from trees? So you figured this out with these results? Very curious. Fact is, it really is curious. The bunkhouse has blue doors, of course. They say Tom Newbold had started to paint his house when the *Lizzie M.* went down and he never got any farther than the doors. What did you do—shoot northeast from there?"

"Yes, we went down Wednesday afternoon," admitted Roger, hanging his head.

"How did you locate the shot?"

"By a rag stuffed into a cartridge. Only it blew all over the beach and that made it awfully puzzling. I thought the moonlight would reveal some sign, like the shadow of—er—a gibbet or something."

"And instead, it revealed a lot of foolish, tipsy nonsense from Jake Ohlen and Tug Schwartz and Murphy. Now, Roger, I'm not going to call you the way you de-

serve for this—or Highness either (for she heard what I said about it plainly). You went down there twice against orders and to-night got a good scare that is punishment enough, I guess. Only you know if you can't stick by me Morwood's waiting for an excuse to take you away?"

"Oh, Dan!" exclaimed Roger in deep consternation.
"I'll never disobey orders again."

"And we shall never make noſſing wiz bunkhouse, ever," declared Stephanie.

The giant's expression relaxed. "About the treasure, now. There may be gold and silver buried in this island —there's very little above ground, certainly. But it doesn't seem a likely place on account of the continuous shift caused by wind and tide. A Government Coast Survey man that stayed here once explained all that to me. *Erosion*, he called it. Quite a clever chap he was —name of Smithers. Nice fellow, Smithers, but he never could get used to the mosquitoes and I guess he got another berth the next year. But he sketched a lot of maps. And by the way, Boxer, old man, that chart of yours is one of 'em."

"Dan, I don't believe it. Why, just look at the cipher——"

"Sorry, but there isn't any cipher, really. Those figures—they show the depth of the ocean at different points. As for the letters I expect *fne gy s* stand for 'fine gray sand'—material of the bottom of the ocean right there—and *sft m*, soft mud. There's some regular mud holes about half a mile out. I was round a lot with that chap, Smithers, and helped him take his soundings. Those dotted lines represent high tide marks

different years, I guess. This part of the coast is particularly subject to erosion."

The giant began laying the papers carefully together. He did not appear to notice a strained silence in his audience.

"The only part I can't clear up is that poetry o' yours, Box. Whatta you do for that when you feel it comin' on? I wouldn't know how to treat it if you was to get one of those spells in the night." But he forbore to press this matter. "Pirates? Well, I expect the nearest thing we've got to a pirate along shore is old Hermit Pinneo over on Crooked Point. Folks say he used to toll ships on shore with a lantern, tied to a mule's head to make it dance up and down like a ship's light, but I don't know. Cap'n Price don't take any stock in those yarns. He says Pinneo used to grab a handful of fish-hooks on the sly when he came in the store. But perhaps Pinneo would put you on the right track if you could only run him down. He's a shy bird, I guess.

"There comes Miss Janet. You cut along upstairs and I'll detain her here till you're in your bunks, and we'll consider that all bets are off. Good night."

CHAPTER XIX

BOARDERS AND HOW TO AVOID THEM

MISS JANET noticed the children on several nights lingering out on the highroad.

"Come in, both of you. It's after nine."

"We're watching for Dan."

"But Daniel went to Montague. He won't be home till late."

They came in reluctantly with backward glances down the road.

"Let's not tell Miss Janet. She's got plenty troubles of her own."

So they went to their rooms and to bed but kept awake until the step they were waiting for sounded along the porch, echoing loud in the stillness of eleven or twelve o'clock.

"Did I wake you up, Boxer?"

"I haven't been asleep."

"What's the matter?"

"Dan, carry your revolver, won't you, please? Or that blackjack?"

"What for? You worrying about those soreheads the other night? Cut it out. Why, they sit around every night shooting off hot air about me, and when they do sneak downtown and get a drink they holler louder than ever about restrictions I put on 'em. Ohlen and those other two are the worst of the bunch. The dagos don't

kick any. You put the whole thing out of your head. How'd you know anything about a blackjack?"

"I saw it in your second drawer."

"Well, you just keep out of my things!"

Dan had not intended to have his brother see the blackjack—a club made of lead covered with black leather—or the revolver. In case of a bad row he might need them, but he would use his fists first.

Roger reported to his fellow watcher what Dan had said and as time went on and nothing happened and every morning saw the object of their care come in, bending his head to get through the kitchen doorway, and begin breakfast with a good appetite for his oatmeal and with jocular, slangy greetings for all present—gradually their worry faded and they felt that everything was all right; Dan could handle any trouble. Only Roger hated the sight of Ohlen and Murphy and remembered their ugly threats, and he said over and over to his partner, "I wish Dan was rich and didn't need to work with men like that."

Miss Janet Price had a worry of her own.

Five weeks and three days had passed since the sailing of the yacht *Harpoon*. She had written in care of the Surety and Trust Company several letters and had even apologized again for that "scolding letter"—"Though I cannot cease to indorse its interior significance," she added. She let out the surprise she had been saving:—"Mr. Alan, I know you will turn this way when I tell you your little girl adores you. She has always done so." At length she merely begged some news.

But no news came and night after night Miss Janet lay

awake. Now she saw old scenes:—the two lads—her brother and his adored friend from the city—cleaning guns in the kitchen or sitting on the steps with arms over each other's shoulders, and she tried to reconcile that lad with the writer of that hard letter, the man who was off on a pleasure trip indifferent alike to his little girl and his old friends. Again she fancied some disaster and remembered wrecks on this coast and the sailors that were washed overboard when the French barque ran aground. And again she worried all night about money: perhaps she had been too hasty sending back that check. Money was needed right now before the boarders came. The Land Company was trying to hunt up a flaw in their title because they coveted this particular strip of land. That meant lawyer's fees. Here she was with an old man to care for, perhaps a little girl too.

She made up her mind to write soon to New York, to the gentleman who notified her when Mr. Alan went away.

On the eighteenth of June boarders and mosquitoes began to arrive at Blue Heron simultaneously.

Mr. Beagle from Trenton and Mrs. Piffington of Paterson came the same day. Their summer was one long campaign for the largest hot water jug, the top pancake, the breeziest veranda corner, and the right side of the parlor lamp, the first handling of the mail and the last possession of the *New York Times Sunday Supplement*. Mrs. Piffington usually scored, being a veteran of boarding-houses both in America and Europe.

The lady from Philadelphia came June 20th on the 12.05, for that was her day and hour, and Miss Janet

would no more have looked for her on the twenty-fourth at 4.35 than for roses in December.

The Bradshaw family came as soon as Willy and Irene were out of kindergarten, but Mr. Bradshaw only stayed over night and ran for an early train back to town. Stephanie told Roger later that it might be that Mr. Bradshaw disliked the odor of graham crackers. For graham crackers, in a moist and decimated condition, marked the wake of the infant Bradshaws, like a paper chase.

All these were Miss Janet's regular summer boarders —except the youngest Bradshaw who was not regular about anything as yet and had summered nowhere. He occupied a carriage with a crossbar net veil over it, wheeled by a colored girl named Lily Washington, and was given by Stephanie a wary and distant observation. All the other boarders knew Miss Janet well, the house, the meals. They knew the best points of each.

Great therefore was the shock given them by certain changes they discovered on arrival.

A *new* boarder had come. She had been there three months and had the best of everything.

She was in the south chamber. That was offensive in itself, for the south chamber was an apple of discord and Miss Janet was by way of giving it to different ones in turn for the season; Mrs. Bradshaw claimed it this year. But here was the new boarder installed in this largest, lightest, newly-papered, freshly-painted, best corner room. That was not all. The earliest comers had a great deal to tell Mrs. Bradshaw when she arrived.

"New curtains, my dear, and a toilet set that must have cost six dollars though Miss Price probably bought it at a sale—poor, good creature. Pears soap, and did

you count the towels as you passed the door? For old patrons of the house two a day are enough. There is a dainty cover on the bureau—Miss Price knows so little about children! A rocking-chair—new comforter—the large mosquito canopy—a new Ostermoor mattress. And linen sheets! I just stepped inside the door and examined them. I've been coming to poor, dear Captain's for eight years and never dreamed of asking for *linen*."

"But it was my turn to have the room," cried Mrs. Bradshaw. "And Miss Janet *promised* it to me, or at least said she hadn't engaged it for another season, and I wanted one corner for Irene and another for Doris and the Smith boys' room for baby and the one next the bathroom for Willie and Freddie. I had it all planned out and I was sure Miss Janet would let us have them all for the same she let us have the two west rooms last year."

"Who is she? Who's the child? Where'd she come from? What's her name? Whatsa child's name?" demanded Mr. Beagle, who had a testy way of repeating every sentence.

"I didn't catch the *name*," said Mrs. Bradshaw. "I only saw there was one small girl in that great sunny room—the only room in the house fit for family use. I didn't care what her name was."

"I took pains to learn the name," said Mrs. Piffington. "It is such a peculiar name, and new to me, though I have many acquaintances in the residential section of Hoboken."

The lady from Philadelphia looked just as curious as the others though she always kept her rocker at a little distance.

"The name," said Mrs. Piffington, "is Wienerwurst—Sadie Wienerwurst."

"*Wienerwurst!*!" repeated the lady from Philadelphia in awful tones. "That is not a name. It is a sausage." And that day at dinner she caused Miss Janet to place a screen between her table and Stephanie's seat in the dining-room. She was a Mrs. Cadwalader-Stotesbury Jones.

For they ate now in the old store. There were three separate tables besides the meat-block, which remained a meat-block, even under the vestments of a serving table. Miss Janet was busy all the time; she could never be got at any more. Dan spent his evenings out. From the porches all knick-knacks were banished, such as soap-boxes of fishing tackle, dead crabs, and treasures picked up on the surf. Not a pet mud-turtle, even, might disport itself under the eye of the lady from Philadelphia.

The hotel and the cottages were filled now also. Along the highway motorcars, motorcycles, huckster wagons, carriages, carts, and bicycles passed continuously. The beach was peopled—the dock. A boat could not be bailed out except under a hail of advice from dock idlers and houseboat dwellers.

The Bradshaw children were even as Roger had foretold.

They marched into Stephanie's room without a knock and, fixing themselves in front of her, stared with unwinking eyes and propounded questions such as these:

"Are you a lady or a girl?"

"Why do you put soap on yourself?"

"Is that the ocean?"

"Why do they have an ocean?"

"Why is your hair long?"

"Do you sleep on a mattress?"

"Why do you talk funny?"

"Is that the sky?"

"Do you like the sky?"

"Do you like this toothbrush?"

"Does Roger like *his* toothbrush?"

"Does Dan like his toothbrush?"

"Why aren't mosquitoes nice?"

"Is this to-morrow or to-day?"

Roger gloomily beckoned her aside. "What'd I tell you? Aren't they the limit?"

Stephanie acknowledged it.

"The time has come," he declared with a wide gesture, "when the only escape for us is across the deep water."

And so, with their lunch in a basket and a good conscience for ballast, they set the rudder of the *Susan R.*, stepped the mast, raised sail and slipped out of Blue Heron Cove, morning after morning, into the wide stretches of Great Swallow Bay.

They had passed all requirements. Stephanie could swim, dive, and float, and she could handle the *Susan R.* alone.

Great Swallow Bay is not anywhere more than waist-deep at low tide, except in the channels and sunk harbors. It is five miles wide in parts and the summer residents on Blue Heron Island know little of its opposite shore except the end of Long Point, where fishing is good, and the hucksters who come round by the bridge to peddle mainland squash and watermelons. Its hamlets lie far aside from the macadam road to Atlantic City with its whirling tide of travel. Grassy Run and Heckle's

Medders are not even railroad stations. These dozy little settlements lie steaming in the salt mash and get their living off the crick—Tipp's Crick, Grassy Run, and Spearing Cove. Also, there was formerly Crooked Crick, with a little lumber settlement at the headwaters, but the sawmill burned down and a sandbar formed across the mouth of the Crick after a storm, closing it for good.

At the far gray line of the mainland, or "the Main," as Blue Heron called it, Stephanie had peered, shading her eyes and wondering if it was the same as the *Spanish Main*, mentioned in all pirate stories.

But now, often as twice a week, they sailed across and cruised all up and down its shore.

You follow a yacht as it leaves the fishing place where many boats are anchored and find presently the green meadows closing in upon you. This is Tipp's Crick. If you stand up in the boat there are misty hills ahead but all around miles and miles of flat salt marsh dotted with cows, an oyster house, a single willow tree, a stack of salt hay. As you sit in the boat you can only see the banks with grass arrowheads along the top. At low tide these banks look like wet chocolate and they are stuck full of clams and purple mussels and riddled by fiddler crabs, jerking in and out of wet chocolate caves, brandishing their bass violins. Farther along there are nets spread, with corks a-dangle, and old eel baskets and fences and boat-sheds and tributary ditches in which boats lie cached with the grass meeting over them.

Yachts and fast skiffs pass you and presently their sails seem to be taking a walk in the meadow—they've only sailed round the next bend. Other boats go by rather slowly so that whoever is in them can take a good

stare at you under the boom or over the top of rickety motor engines.

Roger and Stephanie stared back, especially when it was a boy their own age or a boatful of tow-heads.

"Those are Tippville kids," said Roger.

Grassy Run and Spearing Cove are like Tipp Crick, only too small for yachts. The *Susan R.* tied up at all the landings and its occupants got out and stood and stared at the tow-headed boys and girls who were manœuvring small boats or helping their fathers or sitting in the door of houseboats. By and by Roger would begin to give advice and the Tippville boys would say, "Aw, shut up!" and very soon everybody would feel acquainted.

"My brother Dan says——"

"Who? Dan Smith? Ain't he the big feller that lifted Mose Rutter's garvey off the mash?"

Dan was known even in Heckle's Medders for certain feats of strength he had performed at Cranberry Low Bottom while waiting for a load of gravel there.

So they made friends and swapped portions of their lunch for pork pie and fried eels out of houseboat galleys and became well and favorably known on all the Cricks. All except, of course, Crooked Crick, which is stopped up and abandoned.

"Maouth filled up in a naweaster. Ain't ary boat been inside Crooked Crick in seven year."

"There has too," disputed Roger.

"Hain't neither."

"Has too. Pirate Pinneo's boat. My brother Dan told me he lived on Crooked Point somewhere up the Crick."

"S-s-s-s-h!"

At the mention of that name all the children drew away and glanced nervously toward the nearest grown-up people—a woman hanging out clothes on the deck of a houseboat and certain individuals in boats who were fathers of some of those present.

"Shut up!"

"Maw says not tew talk 'baout that 'ere."

"Paw might lick me."

But they drew the newcomers farther off along the bulkhead presently and talked in whispers.

"He don't rightly *live* there."

"Whatta you mean?" demanded Roger.

"*He hants Crooked Point.*"

"His dory ain't a real boat."

"My Cousin Si seen it 'baout three year ago early in the morning. Says you could look right through it, he says."

"Pete Rutter and Doe Gibbs got ashore awn the Point. An' they tromped miles an' miles through a mash an' they come nigh the haouse. An' they saw a witch!"

"Yes'n they *run!* An' they kept fallin' in the mash an' they thought they heerd a screech an' they jumped into the garvey an' never stopped polin' till they struck the main channel an' lost their pole."

"Some says if you sight that dory it means foul weather."

"She kites along under full sail when it's a dead ca'm."

"My uncle says Pirate Pinneo's house is full of gold and silver and velvet chairs an' kaigs o' wine off'n vessels

an' Pirate Pinneo he made the vessels founder an' the folks that drownded they come a knockin' there at night an' he keeps a witch at the door to drive 'em off."

"Yes, 'n' when they's a gale I heerd 'em haowlin' round our barn, I did."

As he listened to all this, Roger turned upon one and another of the group eyes of scornful derision.

"*You* don't say so! You kids must be poor boobs. Everything you've said is stuff and nonsense and those two fellows that skipped off and jumped into their boat so fast musta been a couple-a boneheads. Look at here —I'm going up there myself 'n' find out what they is to it. I am."

"You dassent."

"Why dassent I? Come on, Sadie. It's time for us to start down Crick."

As they pushed off he said to her: "Your eyes stick out as though you believed that trash." To the bare-legged crowd watching them from the landing he called back:

"I should worry about your old spook, Pinneo."

Roger took the tiller ropes, for Tipp Crick was difficult steering. As they came out into wide water his companion noticed that he laid his course in a new direction. She looked at him apprehensively.

"Roger, is it so—you go now to Crooked Point to see?"

"Not to-day, to the Point. But I am going some day and you can come with me if you want to. Aw, don't pay any attention to what you hear at Tippville. Those kids don't hardly know enough to catch shrimps. I feel sorry for 'em, living the way they do without public

libraries or museums or—Wanamakers, or anything. But I tell you where I *am* going. Joe Embree's got his boat up by Big Bonnet Island. He's clamping there. He'll tell us all about old Pinneo from A to Z."

Joe Embree was a sad-looking man with very light blue eyes, long sandy moustaches, and a taste for literature. Some time ago the crew of the *Susan R.* had become acquainted with him and they sometimes ate their lunch on his boat. Roger lent him books and Mr. Embree spun yarns in return. He had lived, a bachelor, along Great Swallow Bay some forty years.

Only the upper part of Mr. Embree was visible above the water as they drew near, for he was treading clams in four feet depth. Stephanie had learned to wade in the mud but she never could understand how Mr. Embree could feel for sharp clams with his toes, while eels, crabs, or toadfish even, might be whirling round his shins.

He reached down into the water and threw a handful of clams into the small boat he was holding with one hand.

"How're you, Cap'n? An' how's the mate?"

"We're all right, Joe. We've been over to Tipp's Crick. Joe, have you got time to tell us something? We want to know all about that old Pinneo over on Crooked Point. Everything. I meant to ask you long ago."

"Phin Pinneo, the pirate?" asked Mr. Embree resting his armpits on the gunnel of the small boat.

"Yes."

"Wal, you just tack raound the pint of the island onct or twict whilst I make a change in me clothes and I'll be glad to accommodate ye."

This is what they heard that afternoon on the deck of Joseph Embree's boat, the *Pearlie T.*:

Phinneas Pinneo was an eccentric person (or in Joseph Embree's words, a queer old cuss) who had squatted years and years ago on Boremus Beach, a lonely sandbar south of Blue Heron Island.

He was a small man and dark-skinned, was supposed to be part furriner. He lived by himself and did not welcome visitors, never went from home except to Blue Heron Village to trade at Price's store, always acted shy and scairt. Joe Embree had been anigh his house on Boremus onct and it was all made o' ships' parts. That was shortly before Pinneo moved away.

Whether it was Montague City springing up and bringing so many folks to the island, or them stories the summer folks started—any ways Pinneo moved off Boremus to the Main. Nary person knew he had moved for quite some whiles; he loaded his housel-goods onto a garvey and carried them away at night. Next thing it was rumored he was fixed away on Crooked Point.

What were them stories? Oh, it got rumored he tolled ships ashore with a lantern tossin' on a mule's head. He disremembered if Pinneo owned a mule, but the stories was unlikely. Disasters enough happened on that bar before Montague Light was built without any need to cause more. A ship would go ashore there and be two or three days batterin' round in the surf and it was slow work for the underwriters. Pinneo, he didn't seem like a pirit, on'y sometimes he got liquor from somewhere and then he acted biggoty and bragged what he could do ef he was a mind to.

Mr. Embree had never visited the house on Crooked

Point. He guessed few had. It was a hard place to reach 'count of there bein' a big wide bog over the marsh where the old crick was stopped up, and the riddle was, where Pinneo's house stood, and how he reached it himself. It was known he kep' a boat and it was supposed he carried clams and oysters to folks up the coast off and on. Embree had saw his sail onct or twict early in the morning, in fact, had seen it one morning about two months back about sunrise tackin' up-channel towards the draw—a patched sail and an old garvey and a feller settin' by the tiller he could a sworn was Pinneo.

"He tacked away up-channel and through the draw and I ain't laid eye upon him sence. I lost my clam rake the same day. Yes, they do say bad luck comes along of sightin' that there sail but I don't hold much with luck, good *or* bad. They's no reason for Pinneo to be orn'ry to me for I never was orn'ry to him. I been clost 'nough to him to holler onct or twict and I always hollered 'Hullo, Phin,' same as I would any other feller. But I ain't crossed his bows as clost as that in fifteen year, maybe.

"I've heerd they was curious things inside his house—handsome chairs made of gold and velvet, and lookin' glasses in gold frames and all kinds o' heathen images. Maybe some Sunday I'll run up on Crooked Point and invite myself to call on him."

CHAPTER XX

THIRD EXPEDITION

IT was two weeks after seeing Joe Embree that they set sail on the trip they had thought and talked about every day since then.

If they roamed wild that July and made their own plans without asking advice of Miss Janet or Dan there were many reasons to explain it. Dan was away at the pier all day, for he had to keep a constant surveillance over the lazy, mutinous workmen that had been assigned to him for this piece of work. The evenings too, now that the house was full of strangers, he often spent with some young fellows he knew at Montague Beach.

Miss Janet Price never had a minute to herself any more. When night came she was thankful to be too tired to worry, for another letter had come from the Trenton lawyer saying that a flaw had been discovered in the title to their land. But no news came from the yacht *Harpoon*.

She thought too that it was best for the children to be away on the bay, out of range of questions and curiosity.

Mrs. Piffington had developed a habit of catechising the new boarder whenever she could find a chance. Mrs. Piffington was a tall, thin lady with a very long nose, which had an unfortunate way of poking into other people's affairs. Her eyes too seemed to be trained to

see around corners and spy out something that was not really there.

"Ladies," she began one day about this time, "I am more and more convinced there is some mystery about that child."

Mrs. Bradshaw and the lady from Philadelphia had very little to do that day and wanted something to talk about.

"Really, Mrs. Piffington. You don't say so?"

"Anything *objectionable*, do you think?"

"I fear so. I have my own suspicions. I have had experience with persons who had a mystery in their past, both in this country and abroad, and I have never failed to sift the secret out. Some of them were members of very distinguished families. One was a countess. It would be strange indeed if I could not sift a Sadie Wienerwurst."

"Pray don't!" cried the lady from Philadelphia raising her hand as if to ward off a blow. She meant, don't mention that dreadful name; its commonness made her shudder.

"I think perhaps I had better not let my little ones play with her," said Mrs. Bradshaw.

Play with the Bradshaw children, indeed! Didn't Roger and Stephanie have to concoct a new detour to the dock every morning to escape from them?

"We see you, Roger! We see you, Sadie! Where are you going? What have you got in that basket? Have you got peanut butter? Our mama says we can eat peanut butter. Why do you take your lunch and go out in the boat? Can we come in your boat?"

On the day of the great expedition they eluded the

Bradshaws and set sail with all conditions favorable, a fair wind, a flood tide, and Miss Janet's permission for them to make a day of it. However, Crooked Point had not been mentioned to her.

August had come, with its hazy skies, its warm south winds and its—mosquitoes! The water was the only place for comfort now. When Stephanie had slapped the last stow-away mosquito on her ankle and the extra breeze that waited by Big Bonnet Island took charge of their sprit sail they settled down with faces toward the big channel and forgot Blue Heron troubles.

Several times in the past weeks they had cruised up near Crooked Point to reconnoiter. It was hard to tell where Crooked Point was, for the line of flat meadows seemed unbroken. A lonely, wooded, uninhabited bit of coast it looked. At night after dark Stephanie thought of it with shivers and hoped that Roger would give up the trip but by daylight she was ready again to go in search of Pirate Pinneo. For Roger had fully decided that Pinneo would put them on the track of what they wanted.

To-day there was a brisk south breeze and the tide ran high. If it had not been at flood just as the *Susan R.* stood about to make a certain spot on the shore everything might have been different for everybody. The flow, still running in, carried them up into the very meadows of Crooked Point.

There the *Susan* lay over on her side and Roger grabbed the sail and rolled it up and they scrambled out. Their shoes sank into matted sea-wrack through which the tide was creeping and their footprints behind them filled with water. Mosquitoes began to swarm around

their legs. Presently the water deepened; it became a wide swamp. At flood tide the bay flowed over the meadow into the swamp, as to-day, and went swirling lazily around the wading tufts of grass.

"I guess we don't go any further," Roger said. He poked in front of him with a stick. "It's not so shallow. Maybe the *Susan* would float if we could pull her over here."

Somehow they did manage to drag their boat across that portion of the point they had traversed on foot and at length she righted herself in the shallow lake. As they waded out after her she floated and slid from their hands into deeper water.

"It is a kind of lake—Mosquito Lake, I guess. Come, climb in."

Stephanie scrambled aboard and crept out on the forward end.

"I think it is deeper over there yet," she said, pointing to a distant clump of bushes. Roger pushed the boat, wading deep, and they slowly crossed the wide, still marsh.

"Why, there's a kind of current here!"

It flowed sluggishly toward the thicket of marshelder bushes. When they had rounded this they understood.

"Sadie, this is Crooked Crick!"

The swamp shelved off suddenly into deep brown water, very still, except for a lazy ripple which flowed, curiously enough, up-stream. Here it was a wide lagoon. Further on its banks drew together and it became a creek, like Grassy Run. Only it was dead, deserted, drowsy, in the morning sun; even the water with its shelving pools seemed deserted of all life.

It was true that they had managed to find their way into the almost stagnant pond which had been a creek flowing into the bay until its mouth was stopped up in a storm flood. A swamp now covered the meadow but they had chanced upon this deeper water-way leading back inland. And now for the first time they looked behind them and thought of their return.

By standing in the boat they could see, far behind at the horizon, a tiny white patch or two, which were yacht sails on Great Swallow Bay. All around them was salt marsh. Not an oyster hut or haystack broke its flatness until it began to mix with the outer spurs of forest.

"The tide will be out a mile before we get back."

"You think Pirate Pinneo's house is much more far?"

"Don't know. Can't see any house from here. It must be up there toward the woods."

Stephanie shaded her eyes and stared toward the gloomy woods. "Perhaps there is, at all, no house. Perhaps we are better not to try."

For a minute Roger leaned upon his pole listening to the stillness. Then he gave a great push that shot them well up-stream.

"All this summer we've been hearing about Pirate Pinneo. And now we've landed on Crooked Point where they said you couldn't, and we've found Crooked Crick that's been lost for years. I say let's make a thorough job of this."

The shores of Crooked Crick began slowly to slip by. Every twenty feet or so it earned its name by making a hairpin turn. The banks grew higher, the current swifter *up-stream*. Suddenly their boat slipped sidewise.

"Hullo! This is where the current runs to."

A ditch branched off to the right here, northward, turning and disappearing amongst reeds and elders.

"The crick empties into that ditch from both ways. I wonder—could it be an outlet? It's wide enough for a small boat."

It was sultry to-day on Crooked Crick. Mosquitoes lay in wait along its shores—greenhead flies too that stuck and clung to wet-stockinged legs. But all these pests were forgotten when the first signs of human habitation showed along the way.

"See that old eel basket?"

"Yes, and there a post, has on it an iron ring."

"Corks from an old dragnet."

"Piles of oyster shells."

With rising excitement they greeted each proof that living persons had been here before them. Suddenly as they rounded a jutting bank Stephanie cried:

"Look, Roger, look!"

They both stood up from their seats, for there ahead were a landing and a boat.

It was only a platform of rotting planks, sagging in the stream, and an old scow with one end high amongst the grasses and the other buried under water. A willow tree grew over both. To its trunk other boats had once been fastened, for there were cleats and a dangling end of rusty chain. Behind the willow something that might be a path tunneled off into the thicket of marshelder bushes.

Roger swung the *Susan* in beside the landing, caught hold of a willow shoot and laid down his pole.

"You think we got there, Roger?"

"I think we better tie up here and see."

But they did not step ashore at once. It was almost noon. Cloudless blue stretched overhead. The breeze had gone down and along shore the high grasses, which were in blossom and had fringed beards hanging from their spikes, barely quivered. The line of forests to the west shimmered in a haze.

A scuffle sounded in the weeds. It was only two or three yellow-legs winging to some spot even more undisturbed than this.

"Come on. Mosquitoes will eat us up if we stay here."

They tied their painter to the old willow and plunged at once into the crooked path.

It led down through swampy ground, then took a turn upward and brought them out on a sort of low plateau from which they could see far and wide. There was the bay, pale blue in the distance, with miles of yellow-green salt meadows in between. Here were the beginnings of the woods—willow, scrub-oak, pine. Quite near a thick grove of trees and scrub. The path had lost itself.

"What's that? At the far corner of those trees, above a long pine branch?"

Stephanie looked and saw the gable of a low gray house.

They caught their breaths and clutched each other. Even Roger at that moment felt like turning back. No smoke rose above the trees and not a sound except the whisper of wind in grass and trees disturbed the quiet.

Very slowly they went on. Here was the path again, going down-hill, and it was paved with crumbling oyster shells.

"Remember," muttered Roger. He meant, remember that they had agreed to greet Pirate Pinneo, no matter if he ran out with a gun, in the same friendly way that Joe Embree recommended: "Hullo, Phin."

Now the brush grew thick. They pushed aside some branches and came up, smack, against a clapboard wall.

"That way," Roger whispered, giving Stephanie a little prod so that she turned ahead along the wall. He had a piece of marshelder bush which he was waving around both of them to drive away mosquitoes. Suddenly Stephanie faced round and plunged into this waving branch, her eyes wild and both hands uplifted.

"Ach, ach! Away! Run, Roger, run!"

"What is it? What did you see?"

"A lady stand wiz back against the wall. One *Gr—rosse Frau*, so tall *und* fat." The forgotten words tumbled out unconsciously. "*Schnell, ehe* she shall turn and snatch at us."

Roger wheeled and took one step in panicky retreat.

But this was not doing the thing up thorough—to run away from the very door.

"Sadie, you get behind me, so if anything *does* happen."

He stepped forward, then stopped short.

This wall was not a wall but a boat's side, curving toward a sort of prow. It had a row of portholes high up and a railing at the top, and there in front—

He laughed shakily, out loud.

"Why, Sadie, that thing at the bow is a wooden figurehead."

CHAPTER XXI

PIRATE PINNEO'S HOUSE

SHE was a fine (though stout) seven-foot-high figure of a woman. Against the front of the house, or the bow of the boat (whichever you choose to name it) her back was planted, and with head held high she stared, not quite directly forward, but in a nor'-by-easterly direction, so fixedly that one instinctively glanced to see what the wooden lady was rubbering at. Only a marshelder bush out on the open point, apparently. But she fixed on the bush, by some trick of painting which the gales of sixty years had failed to wash out, a look of alert, vigilant watchfulness.

She wore a low-necked wooden dress, full in the skirt. The corsage was carved in lace points with ostrich tips on the shoulders. One hand hung at her side. With the other she was lifting her skirt just enough to display an elaborate wheel trimming on her petticoat and the scalloped top of an old-fashioned gaiter shoe. This foot seemed to be stepping forward. The whole effect was that, if what she suspected of that marshelder bush ever really materialized, she would set off at once to see about it.

The intruders stood in front of her and took her all in. There she stood, presiding over this wide silence, this extraordinary building. Wild creepers had crossed

the oyster-shell path and one climbing tendril just touched the lady's pendant hand.

Indeed, there was no lack of evidence that it was a place deserted. What had once been open space along the sides was choked with underbrush—bayberry, pokeweed, golden-rod, Virginia creeper, blackberry, sweet fern, wild rose, and grass. Paint had faded, mouldings sprung; everything wore an abandoned look.

The building (or boat) lay east and west, with the prow end toward the east. Probably there was once a clear view from here across the point to Great Swallow Bay. Its blue water showed much nearer than the newcomers had expected.

It was no place to linger, here at the lady's feet, for mosquitoes swarmed about them in clouds, in the still, hot noon air.

Hurriedly they picked their way around the bow, half-wanting to mutter "Excuse me," for going between herself and that confidential bush of hers, and passed along the north side of the structure.

It was like a boat—all boat in front, with an old gray shanty lashed on outlandishly behind. Or better to express it, this canal-boat affair seemed to have backed up *kerplunk* against an inoffensive old shack in the grove and there stuck fast.

A window in the north side of the shanty was closed with a wooden shutter. From the roof an elbow of stove-pipe leaned over as if to see what was going on below. At the rear they came finally to the door, which had sand and brown drift blown across its sill.

Stephanie broke the silence, observing *sotto voce*:
"Pirate Pinneo is out."

"Rather. Been out quite a while—more'n a year I reckon. Isn't this old craft the queerest proposition?"

"Is it truly then a ship? How has he sailed it so far across the land?"

"I don't think it's any ship—only built to look like one. That old figurehead is real, though. That's the witch they told about. Whew! but these skeets are fierce!"

They walked through deep grass to the door and found it locked.

They stood there, stamping and flapping branches round their shoulders and ankles and grumbling in hushed tones.

"The grass is smoking with 'em. You ought to see your back—it's black. There, I've switched 'em off."

"So—they come round in front instead. Ooh! They make me just crazy over them."

"If we could only get in here. I'd love to see the inside, wouldn't you? I guess old Pinneo's moved away. Swoosh! Oh, dear, my legs!"

"Roger, I am completely eaten. My switch from beating them is broken. I must have another, quick."

A tough, old prickly holly bush grew beside the door. In desperation Stephanie thrust her hand in among its branches, then snatched it back and cried reproachfully.

"This bayberry is full wiz pins."

"It's a holly bush. *Hul-lo!* What's this?"

From its shaken boughs a large brass key attached to a string had tumbled at their feet.

"Why—why—I believe it's the key to this door! Hid in the holly bush when he went away, but the string

rotted and you shook it out. Great luck! Now we can get in!"

The key turned rustily. As persons pursued by mosquitoes are wont to do they squeezed in with backward flappings and a hasty slamming of the door. Darkness—musty smells—the chirping of a cricket. That was all, till Roger remembered he had matches and struck one.

Directly in front of them they saw a candle on a table. Roger lighted it and the candlestick was the first of the many curious things they looked upon inside those walls:—it was a cork float with a hole in the middle and a fish-hook for a handle.

Roger took this in his hand and by its light they began to look around.

The yellow flame twinkled back at them from dark, polished surfaces. A chest, cabinets of drawers and parts of one wall, which seemed to be composed entirely of doors, were all handsome somber woods. The heavy dark door in the midst must open upon the other portion of the building. This room was merely the shanty. Everything in it was in perfect order.

The table on which they found the candle was a curious structure:—Hogshead top neatly covered with sheet copper; one ebony leg carved elaborately in acanthus leaves; one turned pine leg from a cheap pine table; one piece of brass railing; one cedar branch with the twigs lopped off. The table rested squarely, however, and did not joggle as they leaned on it.

On either side the window stood great chests of drawers and between them a carved chest of some black wood. Next came the east wall, all doors. It was a patchwork of doors in all shapes and sizes. Perhaps

the large door with lockers at each side had been torn entire from some cabin and the other motley cupboards ingeniously joined around it to cover the whole wall.

At the west wall was a stove that had railings round the top of it and curious arrangements for washing dishes. Next the door the porcelain tank and basin from a modern stateroom were fastened against the wall.

"They have 'em like this on the big liners. Dan takes me to the piers sometimes."

"I go on liners too but I saw nothing like it."

"What liner did you go on?"

"The *Adonis*. The *Dulcetania*. I forget what more."

"Why did you go? To look around?"

"But no. To sail the ocean across, I go on the *Dulcetania*."

"What! You been to Europe? You never told me so. Did your father take you? Was it fun? Did you see any kings and queens?"

Stephanie shrugged. She was fingering a curious article hanging by the door. "I forget. Wiz Fräuleins and the Tante I go and I am always ill and it is most stu-pidd."

"Well, I'd think it would be *great*." For a moment he stood staring at his companion through his round spectacles as at a greater curiosity than anything else in Pirate Pinneo's house.

Dan had forbidden him to question her. He had said it was a thing only a cad would do, under the circumstances. Yes, but what were the circumstances? He wasn't a cad, of course, but sometimes she told things of her own accord and they were always extraordinary things—a father that lived in another hotel, a lot of dif-

ferent German women to teach her but they never seemed to have taught her anything worth while. He knew nothing about girls; he never went to parties. Brother Morwood didn't know any ladies, so naturally there were no invitations for himself, as these things seemed always managed by the women. Of course, one saw girls here and there, and fellows at school had sisters. Some small girls in the city went out to walk with nurses. Others rode in limousines. But he was convinced you'd never find one of these with a name like *Sadie Wienerwurst*.

"Roger, I ask you three times what is this vegetable wiz nossing in her?"

"It's a gourd dipper. And here's a pail hollowed out of solid wood. Look at those chairs made of sections of a big mast. Some contriver, isn't he? Where do you suppose he's gone? I'd think he'd rather stay right here in this dindy little house."

Over the stove hung a row of strange utensils. There were long irons with arrow points and wooden handles; there were curved knives with two handles; Roger lifted gingerly something like a poker and it had an odd little movable blade on the end.

Stephanie's eyes enlarged with a grim idea. "You think they are for killing persons, yes?"

"No. But for killing whales, maybe, and cutting them up. I've seen pictures like 'em. Say, but this place is better than the best museum in the United States."

"Museum? As the Metropolitan? But that has nossing nice at all."

One wall, as has been said, was all of cupboards, fitted

round a big black walnut door. These cupboard doors of odd shapes and construction were not to be resisted. Just a crack they opened them and peered and sniffed inquiringly.

Stephanie half-closed her eyes. "Of the sea it smells," she murmured.

"And of ships," said Roger.

Ah, if those cupboards could have spoken! If the galley stove had stepped out in front and called the roll:—"Cupboards, what do you know of life below decks? You satin rosewood panel inlaid with ivory?"

"Here, sir! Rare wines, pistols, and sealed papers from the captain's cabin of an old-time sailing vessel."

"You big pine doors painted green?"

"Here, sir! Spoiled pork and wooden coffee for men before the mast."

"Here, sir! Quinine and epsom salts."

"Here, sir! Sperm candles, lamp-oil, oil soap."

"Here, sir! Stores for a menhaden fishing steamer off Blue Heron beach."

"Here, sir! Ladies' bonnets, shoes, and hairpins, on a coastwise liner."

And from that battered oak with the broken lock a hoarse mutter:

"Here, sir! Cutlasses, long-knives, and a brace o' pistols."

But no real voices sounded here, only the whispers of the two explorers. The cupboards were full of stores. They thought it wrong to rummage and could only guess at things by candlelight.

"Perhaps next time we come——" murmured Roger.

He held the candle high and his thoughts were all for that black walnut door. Stephanie shrank a little. "You go to open it?"

"Yes. That's the boat part in there. It might be, you know, that somebody's done for Pirate Pinneo and left his body in the forward hold. I've been thinking of it all the time. It's our duty to investigate."

With these cheerful words he laid his hand upon the wrought brass knob and turned it.

It opened at once with a creak and a sprinkle of fine dust. A draft blew out their light.

But it was no longer needed. They were in a large light room.

"Who is that?" cried Stephanie stumbling back in fright.

It was only the reflection of a girl in a blue gingham dress and a boy holding a candlestick. A huge mirror, high, gilt-framed, resting on a narrow marble shelf, commanded this strange room into which they had ventured a few steps.

What was it like—this room?

The light came from a row of round port sashes, high on each side. A length of fine crimson carpet stretched to the far end of the room. There was a skylight of green, heavy glass in the ceiling and on each side of it wooden hatches, with ladders nailed against the walls leading toward the hatches. Along each wall furniture was arranged in stately order—red plush sofas in the corners, tufted red plush chairs, four great oil paintings of sailing ships on the pine walls.

It was not these state saloon monstrosities, however, that the newcomers advanced to look at, on tip-toe. In

between the chairs were old cabinets of teakwood and blackwood, sideboards and carved stands, and on these were small objects, carefully set forth.

No wonder they forgot Blue Heron village far away, the falling tide, the great salt marsh, their lunch under the seat of a sneakbox in lost Crooked Crick.

What was Pirate Pinneo? A savant? A collector of rare *bijou*? At any rate he had a taste for such articles as these:

Chessmen, checkers, cribbage-boards, puzzles, and games, carved from ivory, oriental woods, jade.

Little models of ships, perfect in every part, sometimes with wooden skipper and crew, but the sails and cordage hung ragged, for time had rotted them.

Curious shells—all Tiffany colors; beads from China, Malay, and Peru; husks of fruit, dried sea flowers.

Images with ugly faces, little ivory animals, and tiny men with umbrellas, ladies in two-wheeled carriages, tea sets small enough for these.

Great teeth with pictures scratched and colored on them.

Flowers made of birds' feathers. Sprays of flowers made of little shells.

Bracelets and cups and scent bottles and jewelry and toys of jade, sandalwood, fish bone, fruit pits, soap, copper, brass and silver, lava, mother of pearl.

Curious knives. Daggers—a great curved one exactly like those in the *Pirates' Own Book*.

In short, here was every sort of thing, made, collected, picked up in foreign ports and carried round the world, by sailormen of every rank and nation. Some of these trinkets had lain long in the sea. Others must have been

taken whole from seamen's boxes—or—from the pockets in their clothing, who could say?

Roger and Stephanie looked and looked, softly exclaimed, and touched Pirate Pinneo's playthings one after another with respectful marvel and delight.

Suddenly, however, whether it was the light slanting more redly through the ground-glass panes, or their forgotten appetites, they looked at each other and pulled up with a jerk.

Roger drew out his watch. "It's *four o'clock!*"

"And we eat yet no lunch."

"And the tide will be out, out, out. And we've got to drag our boat miles over the flats. Unless there *is* some other way." He glanced toward the ladder and the hatch. "That goes up to the roof that looked like a deck. Perhaps I could see the Crick from there."

Stephanie sat down in a tufted chair to wait. The chair smelled uncommonly musty. There was a queer smell through all the room but when Roger unfastened a hook and pushed up the wooden trap a breeze fragrant of pines came in. She wished Roger would come back. There were shadows behind the great musty pieces of furniture. For some reason she half-imagined herself back at the Juilliard in her school-room on a long, dull afternoon when every one had forgotten her, when she wrote in her journal, "*I wish Herr Vater* lived by me."

She heard Roger's step above and then he called to her in a queer voice:

"Sadie!"

"Yes."

"Come up here—quick!"

Up on the deck of Pirate Pinneo's houseboat, or boat-

house, there was a splendid outlook. Here were the pine woods casting long, dark shadows. There was the bay, and an arm of it not more than half a mile away to the northeast. She could see yacht sails in the channel.

"Come on in here."

Roger was in the little deckhouse—a tiny square structure with windows all around. He had found the door not securely fastened and had readily pushed in. This was where Pirate Pinneo slept; a sort of bunk ran along one side. There were lockers and a hanging lamp. It was, like all else here, neatly built.

Roger stood in the corner bending over something—absorbed in it. Stephanie came beside him. He had his elbows on a little shelf and was tracing with his finger some writing on a scrap of paper. The paper was pinned to the green felt lining of an open old-fashioned writing case. The pins were slightly rusted.

Roger straightened up, holding his forefinger on the paper.

"See here!" he said. His face was pale. "Sadie, here's the buried treasure."

It was almost dark and Dan was waiting at the wharf with a lantern when the tiny sail he was watching for came gliding round the end of Little Islands.

They had followed the secret outlet from Crooked Crick and it proved to be a short-cut, but at its mouth they felt a sudden, ominous jolt and crack. Something sharp had stove in the bottom of their boat. Afterward they found it was an ancient, rusty anchor, point-up in the ditch.

Only a small hole was stove in the *Susan* but Roger had to bail, all the way home.

"Anything the matter?" began Dan. "Miss Janet's worried stiff. You mustn't stay out late like this. Where've you been all day?"

Roger showed Dan the damage done to his boat but managed to get off to bed without many explanations. In the hall after supper a short whispered conversation passed between him and Stephanie, and the paper, which gave clear directions for the finding of treasure buried on Crooked Point, passed into her keeping for the night.

CHAPTER XXII

THE BOARDERS THINK THEY HAVE FOUND SOMETHING

Do not forget that the year of this story was 1914, the beginning of the war.

Even in the hamlet of Blue Heron it stirred excitement and consternation, as everywhere in the world. The newspapers were full of scareheads. It must have been from these that Mrs. Piffington gathered an idea—an idea that probably seemed fantastic even to herself at first. But some persons have a talent for making brick without straw and building with these brickless bricks whole imaginary structures, which appear to them more and more real as they grow. They do become substantial enough to hide the real truth sometimes, and Mrs. Piffington would probably be the dullest of all in routing out actual trickery and danger.

Mrs. Piffington's idea was this:—That Sadie Wiener-wurst must be a German spy!

"My dear, it is all explained about that child. Everything points to it. No wonder I took such a dislike to her." Mrs. Piffington came close to the lady from Philadelphia and whispered the two words.

The latter in her alarm sought old Mr. Beagle of Trenton.

"Can it be true? Can we possibly have under the same roof with us a person of that character?"

"Very probable. Very probable. Ver-y probable, ma'am. The papers are full of just such cases. See these headlines in the Trenton *Gazette*: 'Conspiracy Scare on the *Hinterland*. Tale of Plot to Blow Her Up.' 'Arrests in England. Plots Revealed.' 'Women Held as Suspects.' What do you read in your Philadelphia paper?"

"Sir, I read nothing that occurs north of Market Street."

"Very foolish, ma'am. Very foolish. Ver-y foolish. if you'll pardon me for saying so. Better get your mind on this. Take this very case. Take the facts. Mrs. Piffington claims she pointed them out first but I noticed the case myself. I'm a lawyer, ma'am. Here's a child comes down here by night. From nobody knows where. Hoboken, you say? Just question her and see how much she knows about Hoboken. Imposes herself on Prices. Prices are easy—a child can pull the wool over their eyes. She gets the best room and all the attention. Enlists the Smith boys. I distrust the Smith boys—noisy fellows. She spends her days out of sight, talks broken English, refuses to answer questions, looks as guilty as a dog in the pantry, makes signs to Roger Smith. But above all, ma'am, look at the name. Look at the name. Look-at-the-name—Wienerwurst."

Mrs. Bradshaw called Lily Washington, the colored girl she had brought to Blue Heron to help take care of the baby.

"Lily, don't let any of the children play with that girl. Don't wheel the baby near her. Don't let him take his nap on that side of the house. We have reason to think there is something queer about her."

"Laws, Mis Bradsher! Well now, Mis Bradsher, de chillun can't get her to play wiv 'em, nohow. De chillun is a-worryin' an' a worryin' afta Sadie an' Roga continual, but Sadie an' Roga dey jest flee away f'om 'em. Yes, ma'am. You don't need to caution nobody 'bout dat. Sadie and Roga, dey wouldn't play wiv Willie an' Freddie an' Irene ef you was to set de po-leece atter 'em."

Mrs. Piffington would not permit any one to forget the matter. She called a meeting on the upper veranda.

"You are all aware by this time that we have under this roof a person whose appearance, conduct, and affiliations have made *me* uneasy for some time."

"Pardon me. Pardon me. Par-don me, ma'am. Don't forget that my legal mind, basing conclusions on cold facts, showed you your real premises."

"And you know I was upset from the very moment I heard she had the south chamber. I wrote Mr. Bradshaw about it."

"Her name," said the lady from Philadelphia, "was to me in itself a warning."

"My friends," interposed Mrs. Piffington. "Let us put aside this discussion and bend all our energies to gathering evidence. That is our duty now, in order to bring this matter to a head. Then we will wait upon Janet Price in a body and lay the matter before her. Let us each take one member of this household and try to extract information from them. I would suggest that Mr. Beagle, being a lawyer, might extract something from Miss Janet Price. The lady at my right will perhaps be willing to observe Dan Smith from a distance. Mrs. Bradshaw, perhaps your little ones might draw

something from Roger at their play. I intend to put a few questions to Cap'n Price. Are you all agreed? That is excellent. Now I must tell you that I have something to report already. Let us draw our chairs closer together:

"Roger Smith and that child have an important paper secreted in this house. I don't know what kind of paper but doubtless a map of Great Swallow Bay showing the best way for warships to get in. You know those two have spent all their time on the bay since we came. The other evening they came home very late; it was twilight when they landed and Janet Price had sent Dan Smith to the dock with a lantern to meet them. They seemed to be tired out. And they had this paper. I overheard them whispering about it in the hall. As my door was slightly ajar I caught the first words, which were, 'Where shall we hide it so the boarders can't find it?'"

Mrs. Piffington looked around as if to say, "Can any one doubt me now?"

Her fellow boarders agreed that things should certainly be looked into. They promised to watch and report as she had suggested. It stirred a breath of excitement in the heavy August weather and gave them something to talk about when they rocked on the porch after tea.

Dan Smith was puzzled to notice, as he went in and out or sat at table, a lorgnette directed upon him in a steady, unwinking scrutiny. He felt of his tie and his coat collar, was sure he had washed his face before dinner.

"Boxer, have you any idea what there is so attractive about me lately? The lady from Philadelphia's got my

number and she's trying to memorize it. Maybe I remind her of somebody."

"I didn't notice," said Roger absent-mindedly.

"You didn't! How do you miss it? I walk up from town and she's craning her neck over the railing, come up here to our room and see a door open and two eyes at the crack. She doesn't even read the news any more without goggling at me over the top of the paper."

"Paper!" exclaimed Roger with a start. "What paper?"

"*Philadelphia Evening Ledger*," answered Dan, looking at his brother curiously. Roger took no notice but remained at the window lost in cogitation.

Mrs. Piffington was not able to corner Cap'n Price for several days. With the arrival of the boarders the old man betook himself to a bench against the south wall of the Life Saving Station and there in peace he smoked his pipe, beat everybody at checkers, and was the final authority on all that had happened in this county a long time ago.

In the evening, however, he sometimes sat solitary in the lower gallery with his chair tipped back against the front of his one-time store where he had used to sit in palmier days and lay down the law to Blue Heron village assembled on this porch.

Mrs. Piffington should have known better than to tackle him there, but curiosity makes people bold.

"Ah, here you are, Cap'n Price, all by yourself and wishing no doubt for company. But Miss Janet is out, and so you'll have to put up with my poor society."

"It 'pears as though I would."

"This charming view! I suppose it is all just as it was thirty or forty years ago."

"No, ma'am. They was less brush in front of the house and fewer gnats. Skeeters and gnats are biting bad right here to-night."

"Are they? Let us go inside then for our little talk, Cap'n Price."

"I'm accustomed to 'em."

"Oh, dear." The lady drew her skirts round her ankles. "What I was about to say is, what an interesting new inmate you have here this year."

"I hain't sighted any."

"I mean the new boarder."

"Boarders is all the same to me, ma'am, new or old. I'm accustomed to them also. When I ran foul o' treachery five and thirty year ago I was in for more kinds o' trouble than I dreamed of then. Maybe you never heard the true story of that matter, ma'am. It was like this:—Thomas Newbold and me was boyhood friends——"

"Oh, certainly, Cap'n Price. Yes, indeed. I know the story well and have great sympathy for you. But just now I'm so deeply interested in something else—this young girl that occupies the south chamber this season—an attractive child but extremely reticent. What sort of antecedents has she?"

"Ma'am?"

"Her family—who are they? Old friends of yours? Where is her home? Who recommended Blue Heron to her? Are her parents living? What is her father's business? What do you think she and Roger Smith go out in the boat for? She never seems to write letters.

How do you account for that? Do tell me all about her, Cap'n Price."

"All about who?"

"Why, this Sadie Wienerwurst."

"Whinny-ups?"

"No, Wienerwurst—Sadie Wienerwurst."

"I never heard the name before."

Just then Miss Janet's step sounded on the piazza.

"There's Janey hailin' me. *She* knows all about the boarders. It's a cargo I don't handle much and so don't keep posted. Suppose you ask me daughter about this Mrs. Snigglefritz."

But the lady had nothing to say to Miss Janet on the subject. She had tried there before and failed.

Roger had the *Susan* out of water for repairs, as Dan had insisted she must be put in perfect order before they sailed the bay again. He was doing the work himself, and as this kept him in one place for a long time, he was an easy prey for those favorites of his, the Bradshaw children.

Roger paid no attention to the Bradshaw children and never answered their questions if he could help it. When they pressed him too hard he rebuffed them with something like this:

"Say, Willie, did you hear about the fight on the street car?"

"What fight, Rodgie?"

"The conductor punched the ticket."

Or:

"Run quick, all of you or you'll miss the fire."

"Fire! What fire? Where?"

"In the stove."

The Bradshaw children were an easy prey for these ancient traps and admired Roger more each time they fell in. But now for many days he had worked away at his boat in silence, too deep in his own thoughts to ask them even if they'd heard about the row in the restaurant, when the coffee soaked the biscuit.

They must have been dinning at him on the new subject for some time without making him hear. At any rate he was startled by the words:

"Rodgie, why won't you tell us why Sadie is a German spy?"

"What?"

"Our mama says Sadie is a German spy and she told us to make you tell us the secret."

"Who told your mother that?"

"Mis' Piffin'ton."

"Well, of all the—I'm going to tell Mrs. Piffington she's a—— Of course I can't tell her that, but I shall tell her just exactly where to get off. And looka here, if ever you kids say anything like that to me again I'll——" He made a gesture with his fist and looked so fierce that the Bradshaws fled squealing.

Old Mr. Beagle was the only one of the private investigation committee who succeeded in getting results and these results he kept to himself.

He had not acted in the matter at once for he hated the idea of taking the part assigned to him by Mrs. Piffington. But he too was curious and so one day when he brought home the morning mail and found in it two letters for Miss Janet Price he decided to try a little probing.

One of the letters was from a Philadelphia law office,

the other a New York banking house. Mr. Beagle always took a sly peek at every letter as he toddled home from the post-office.

"Letters. Letters. Let-ters. Two letters for Miss Janet Price. *Gazette* for me. Postal card for Mrs. Lavinia Piffington with picture of Grand Cañon. 'Wonderful scenery. Will write from San Francisco.' She got people traveling in the West? D. Smith, *Engineering News*. Letter from Mr. Bradshaw. D'ye know, Miss Janet, I've thought it odd the little girl—you know, what'sername—Sadie—never gets any letters. How'd you account for that?"

Mr. Beagle, fussing over his handful, had not seen Miss Janet flush at the sight of one letter and at the other turn pale and sink into a chair. They were in the summer dining-room, or old store, where Miss Janet had been laying out clean linen.

She opened the Philadelphia letter and glanced through it first, and it shook in her hand. Then she took up the other.

"Whatsername—Sadie—is a peculiar child, ain't she? Very peculiar. German parentage, I take it. You may wonder how I found that out. I'm a lawyer, ma'am. Now how long have her parents lived in this country, Miss Janet?"

Mr. Beagle raised his head to look the witness in the eye and instantly dropped his papers in all directions.

"Miss Janet, ma'am! Help, help! Cap'n! Mandy! Somebody! The woman's fainted."

Several people came rushing in as he shouted—the maids from the kitchen, Mrs. Bradshaw. Miss Janet sat up in a minute saying she was all right but looking

very white. In the flurry Mr. Beagle picked up the two letters and while they were in his hands took a hurried peek at both.

The Philadelphia letter was the one he took to be the cause of Miss Janet's upset. Something about "flaw in your title," "act for dispossession," etc.

The New York letter puzzled him extremely. It ran as follows:

SURETY AND TRUST COMPANY
New York

13/8/14.

Miss Janet Price,
Blue Heron, New Jersey.

Dear Madam:

We have not answered your recent letters of inquiry because there was no news from the party on the *Harpoon*. At present we are under considerable anxiety. It is almost two months since any word has been received and we fear some accident. It has been reported that a German destroyer was active in those waters and as the captain and crew of the *Harpoon* are English seamen there might have been trouble. We are still hopeful of good news and will forward the first information we have regarding Mr. Alan Rand.

Yours very truly,
FRANK C. GOODRICH.

CHAPTER XXIII

DAN TRIES TO RAISE MONEY

It was afternoon of a very hot Sunday. People who went out in the open crept slowly along with parasols over their heads. The mainland, distant islands, the town of Montague, seemed to float, quivering, in the lower sky. On the beach the sand was so hot it could be felt through leather-soled shoes. The yellow gravel of the village streets smelled stifling as it baked at midday.

Over at the hotel the piazza was full of people taking naps, with fans and newspapers dropping from their hands, while the clatter of dishes at the rear slowly became less. At Cap'n Price's also an attempt was being made to sleep away fried chicken and ice cream.

Roger and Stephanie sat on the north steps of the lower porch, each with a swatter in hand, which they used on flies or to fan themselves with, as need might be. They sat with knees hunched up and they spoke together in low tones.

"It's your turn to keep the paper for awhile."

"But Miss Chanet looks everywhere in my room. I put him under the cover of the washstand and she changed the cover and said, 'What is this?' and I said, 'A letter of a pirate,' but Miss Chanet is not thinking of it. Roger, what got into Miss Chanet, yet? Since two

days ago when she was sick she is quite strange and often I think she has cried."

"I know and she writes heaps of letters. I posted three in one day and she had me put 'special' stamps on them. Maybe it's those Newbolds. Maybe the boarders make her sick. They do me. They're too nosy."

"Mrs. Piffington is nosier as any person I ever saw. And Roger, I think she has seen the paper. She ask me a most mean question."

"What was it?"

"Never mind. But it is not any nice question."

"Aw, what was it? How can I tell she's seen it? Go on."

"She ask me, have I a letter from my father," said Stephanie with a challenging look.

Roger observed her meditatively. "Don't you ever get letters from your father?"

Stephanie hung her head and muttered: "No, not any."

Roger had given up the problem of Sadie's past life, before she came to Blue Heron, with the general conclusion that it was "some queer mix-up." So he merely said:

"Well, I just as soon Brother Morwood never wrote to me. He just keeps asking if my eyes are well enough to study my algebra. But you think old Piffington meant our treasure letter?"

"Yes. She said, 'I saw Roger hand you last night a letter.' I think it was that last time you gave me Pirate Pinneo's letter to hide."

"She's an old nuisance. Well, never mind. It's been hard waiting but now the *Susan's* most ready—I'll have

her in the water to-morrow, stow her full of picks and shovels, and by Tuesday, anyway, we're off. Hope the heat lets up. Now I tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to copy Pirate Pinneo's letter and we'll just leave the real letter here. Because we don't want to lose it overboard or have it blow away. Our proof would be gone then and Dan and everybody'd say, 'Pshaw, you dreamed it!' No, we must find a good safe place and leave the real copy behind. Where d'you think we better hide it?"

"I think not anywhere upstairs where the Bradshaws go. They go in my room and make a house wiz my mosquito bar. And Tuesday is cleaning day when the rooms are swept and Miss Chanet changes everything. Well, I don't know what to do."

"I'll tell you a place I thought of. Under something that's never moved and nobody'd ever think of it." Roger leaned over and whispered.

At this moment some one hailed them from the road. It was Cap'n Bill Pharo, trudging slowly up from the dock fanning himself with his old duck hat.

"Whew! How'd ye enjoy this weather? Say, Rawger, is Dan away?"

"Yes, he went to Atlantic City in an auto yesterday."

"Comin' back to-night?"

"I think so. Why?"

Cap'n Bill hesitated, then came up close to the steps.

"Nothin', only I just sailed up from Montague. Feller there told me Dan Smith's men had been in town Saturday night and he guessed they had took liquor out to the quarters too. I just thought I'd pass the news to Dannie. Ef he don't get in till late you tell him, Rawger."

Roger waited till Cap'n Pharo had gone on. "I shan't tell him if he comes in late. I shan't say a word till morning. And, Sadie, we won't wait till Tuesday about Crooked Point. I'll get up at five o'clock to-morrow so's to have the *Susan* ready to start any minute. If what our paper says is true it's likely we'll all be rich. Then Dan won't need to worry any more. He can go to college or do anything. We'll help out Miss Janet and Cap'n and I'll buy a shotgun of my own, I think, and a power boat. What'll you get with yours?"

"Mine?"

"Your share of—you know—what we dig up?"

"So? Shall there be for me a share?"

"Why, of course. We'll be square about everything—and you'll have had a big hand in the whole business."

Stephanie glanced at her brown fist and it was not as big as Roger's own but she imagined it full of gold money and jewelry. She meditated. Six months ago when she had many possessions and few wishes it would have been harder to choose.

"A new sponge for the *Susan*. The old is so—so emaciated, yes? Crab-net for myself. And new bazing suit wizout a long skirt, which Miss Janet sews on mine."

"Is that all?"

"One other thing, when I got money for it. You think there is a little more?"

"Sure. Crab-nets and bathing suits don't cost much and I intend to get a new sponge anyway."

"So—I get enough and I go on the train once to New York to make a call on my *Herr Vater* when he is re-turned from that trip."

"Well, that's easy too. Shall you stop in Hoboken?"

"No," said his companion blankly.

Roger now went upstairs after the document which they had almost worn out with care in the last ten days. He extracted it from under the cover of his algebra, a very safe place which neither he nor any one else seemed liable to disturb. However Miss Janet's tendency to clean and straighten things up made all upstairs risky.

He brought the paper downstairs and called Sadie into the big room where the tables were spread for supper.

"Here it is." He drew it from his coat and smoothed it out, and together they took a parting look. Except for this bit of paper the house on Crooked Point, with its furniture and playthings redeemed from the sea, its watching figurehead, its lookout on the roof where the writer of these very words had pinned his message before he went down the ladder and out of his door months ago—all these would seem too fantastic to be believed. But here under their eyes was his very writing:

"The stuff is were the figger is alookin in a trunk in a kaig. I alis intent to giv it up but sorta let it go till I herd they dug up the old mark and haf lawiers. No lawier wont find me they needunt to look. I ain't a pirit. Foks may say all they will I never told no boat in so help me. One skuner was a frensh bark of wines I lug tu frensh fellers out the serf myself. The goods in this house if ary person can find oners or clams of wrecked vessels *Count Pulasko*, *Osceola*, or *John C. Calhoun* are welkim. I had my use and also plesure from same but a bad conshins is a uneesy mate and this mash doos not agree with my helth any more. Enny way Cap'n got

fooled. He ses sesee Fishhooks is about his size sesee,
Fairwell to all,

PHINNEAS PINNEO.

The stillness of a broiling hot afternoon was over the house. Presumably the boarders napped. Cap'n was asleep, Miss Janet at afternoon church.

"See, I'll slip it here. Nobody will ever think of this."

"Hark," said Stephanie. She thought she heard some one in the long pantry. But Roger said it was only her fancy.

Later in the day more rumors came about Dan's crew. They were making a racket at the quarters that could be heard all up and down the road.

Dan did not get back till midnight after the household was in bed. But some one woke him early with the news and he dressed hurriedly and started for the scene of trouble. Everything had been running smoothly the past week and he had felt it right to take a holiday.

Roger was up already, fussing with his boat. After breakfast, by the aid of several persons on the dock, he got her into the water. Warm work it was too, this blazing, cloudless morning.

Sadie came running down the road and called and beckoned with both hands to him. She would not speak till he came near, away from the other people on the dock.

"Roger, Roger! Something happens. Dan comes running from the quarters and I am in the hall but he never looks on me. Only leaps into your room and pulls everything around and as he comes out—Roger, there in

his hand is a small gun and something else, a black thing——”

“The blackjack!” cried Roger, and his freckled face lost color.

“And he runs fast down the road, out from sight. I think no one sees him come, only me.”

“Let’s go up to the house and ask Miss Janet.”

Miss Janet was in the pantry setting away dishes. She dropped a platter when they spoke to her and it broke in pieces and they noticed how her hands shook as she tried to gather the fragments. Miss Janet now for three days had not been herself, had seemed like one distracted.

“I thought perhaps it was a letter. Or a telegram. Daniel? I only know, dear, that people came in here last night saying the men were making a terrible hubbub at the quarters and this morning I woke him early with the news. I had not slept myself. No, I didn’t see him come just now. Oh, I hope he won’t need to use violence! I can’t bear any further trouble.”

They hung about and kept watch down the road, which glared and quivered in the heat. At last, perhaps twenty minutes later, here came Dan at a run again.

It needed only the first look to frighten them. His coat was torn, his lips bruised, and his face was flushed and angry. He paid no attention to their questions, only brushed them off as if he did not even know they were trying to keep pace beside him.

But soon the whole household knew what had happened and Blue Heron village was buzzing with it.

Dan had found the quarters barricaded. Tables and bunks had been pushed against the doors and two of the crew, out of their heads with drink, had pointed guns at

him from the windows. It was then that he ran back for the weapons he kept in his room at Cap'n Price's. But he did not use them. A few blows of his big fists and a scuffle with Jake Ohlen forced a way into the house. Many of the poor fellows were lying in a stupid sleep from the effects of the bad liquor their ringleaders had brought in Saturday night.

But the others sullenly stood their ground on one point. Dan immediately discharged the whole crew but they refused to leave until full pay had been handed them.

In this they were within their rights. The young boss had been holding back the pay of some to prevent this very catastrophe. His pay check from the company's office would not be due for a week. He had not enough money by him to pay off more than two or three, out of the thirty men.

Now Dan found out the difficulties of raising money on short notice. Big, good-natured Dan had been on the best of terms with everybody on the island but, when it came to borrowing money, good fellowship had none to offer. Ed Bissell, the storekeeper, didn't like to risk so much; Cap'n Nummy hadn't any by him. The city folks had advice to offer but no cash. Poor Dan was even put to the discomfort of being refused and snubbed by his fellow boarders.

He was hardly aware of two pairs of feet trotting behind him as he hurried round the village or of watchful eyes fixed resentfully on those who refused to help him out. He did not miss them when they disappeared.

There was no one on the dock when a small craft containing two persons slipped out of Heron Cove and as

it sprit sail caught the faint, southwesterly breeze bore away round the lower end of Big Bonnet Island. The bay was almost a mill-pond to-day. In the boat's wake the water rolled back in smooth green folds like a lady's train and splashes of foam spread and flattened on the surface. Across the bay the main shore lay misty and blurred in the August haze.

CHAPTER XXIV

HIS FRIENDS GO TO FIND SOME

PIRATE PINNEO's private passage was nothing but a ditch, winding around behind the marshelder bushes and emptying into a cove which had probably been scooped out when the big storm stopped up the crick. At its mouth they saw plainly in the still water the rusty old anchor that had stove in their boat.

They were the only moving things on Crooked Point this morning except a fog of gnats and mosquitoes which rose from the ditch sides as their pole disturbed them. The wind had shifted to westward when they were only halfway across the bay and then it had fainted almost to nothing. It was now noon.

Tide was running out of the ditch and that made hard poling. Roger poled and his partner sat behind him, her feet and legs covered by a piece of canvas, and waved a long branch around both of them. Their faces trickled with perspiration.

In Crooked Crick Roger took oars and rowed. Past the rotting eel basket, the post with an iron ring, the corks dangling from some rags of net, the pile of oyster shells. Everything baked in the sultry heat and the mud banks smelled abominably. Along their crests fringe grasses never quivered, for the wind was dead, but the mainland forests half a mile away waved in a watery mirage.

"I wish greenhead flies hadn't ever been invented."

"And I wish the mosquitoes of the whole world were together in one great bunch which I might smash."

But these wishes had been uttered many times before with no effect.

"Roger, we got no lunch."

"We've got apples and cookies. I grabbed some when I ran home for the tools."

Just then they swung around the bend and in against the old landing. An hour and a half they had spent coming from the bay. It was half-past one.

They waited to eat what they had. When they threw the apple cores into the deep brown pool a great old eel switched up from the bottom and down again, the sole inhabitant of Crooked Crick.

To-day in the sultry air everything seemed stiller than before. They lugged their tools through the deep grass and from the high ground saw again the corner of that low gray roof.

Roger muttered, "Well, it's really there."

Stephanie drew nearer. "It could happen that *he* might get back already."

"It could happen that somebody else has been here and been digging." That sent them racing toward the house.

Nothing had changed except that the stove-pipe had blown over at a different angle. The strange building lay there blistering in the sun. The rows of portholes looked like unblinking eyes of some great Argus fish. Milady, the figurehead, stood forth with the sun blazing on her head and stared unremittingly at whatever she was looking at. The little vine had climbed two inches higher

at her wrist. Close by in the gravel was a footprint—the print of a rubber-soled sneak worn by Roger a week ago last Thursday.

"Where the figger is alookin' in a trunk in a kaig?"
Yes, but where, oh where, was she alookin'?

Not at that marshelder bush at all, they found out when they reached it, but sou'east of that and farther out. Perhaps at that heap of weed? No, sou'east of that and farther in. Perhaps at this baby oak? No. From there she appeared to be looking the interlopers in the eye. That meant farther out again.

With their poor backs quite black with mosquitoes and a great cloud singing round their heads they tramped and stumbled over the rough hummocks of turf, wiregrass, young brush, bogs, and blackberry thickets that lay in front of Pinneo's residence.

"She chase me wiz her eye each place I go but when I am there it is never right."

"She's a cross-eyed block-head and I'd like to swat her one," cried Roger peevishly.

"Now the sun is over her and it makes me blind."

"The sun? Why so it is! Sadie, it's three o'clock. Look up there at that black cloud."

A thunder cap from the northwest had reared its great peaked top far up into the sky.

Stephanie sank down in a heap upon the ground. "Ach, it is too much! So hot, so eaten, and now the thunder too."

Something kept her from bursting into tears, as she had been about to do. Something on the ground just there. Instead of covering her eyes with the hem of her

middy blouse she leaned over and looked intently on all sides of her.

"Roger! Here!"

"What is it?"

"Marks wiz clam shells on the ground. A great square and inside it a ring."

"Sure—as—preachin'. And you're sitting right plum in the middle of it. Sadie, d'you remember a long time ago I called you a mascot? Well, I've said some kinda mean things to you since and laughed at that pigeon English you talk, but I want to apologize right here. You—you—you're the *real thing*, Sadie."

Roger stood in front of his friend and stopped slapping and waving to pay her this handsome compliment.

Forgotten now the sun's glare, the sultry air that made every motion burdensome, the threatening black cloud, even the singing, stinging guardians of Pirate Pinneo's treasure.

Roger ran to get their spades and pick.

The lady was looking this way as much as anywhere, but who would ever have guessed it when a sapling oak had interposed itself between her and the spot? However, somebody had laid out the curious pattern on the turf—a ring of large clam shells inclosed within a square.

"In a trunk, in a kaig."

Roger lifted the pickax to his shoulder and brought it down *thud!* in the middle of the ring.

About noon Dan Smith found he had raised enough money to pay his gang half of what was due them. He

wrote on slips of paper orders for the company for the balance and passed these out, giving them notice at the same time to get off the island before sunset. The first train north would stop at Blue Heron station at three-forty.

He came in after dinner was over, sank into the place he found set for him in the dining-room and rested his forehead on his hand.

Miss Janet came to wait on him herself.

"Where's Boxer and her Highness?"

"I don't know, Daniel. I've been worrying about them. The last I remember was when you were asking Mrs. Piffington on the porch upstairs to lend you money. Roger and the dear child stood right at your elbow listening. I haven't seen them since. They must have gone in their boat, as the boys say the *Susan* is out, but no one saw them start and they took no lunch. They never went before without leaving word with me."

"I haven't half looked after the kid lately." Dan looked up in his old friend's face and said abruptly:

"Miss Janet, this rumpus means the sack for me."

"Oh, Daniel, don't say so. Your brother would not be so unjust. You are not to blame. Neither are those poor fellows, but the wicked people that make bad drink to sell to them."

"Morwood Smith won't think a thing about that either. He'll only think this is the chance he's been waiting for to run me out and take full charge of Roger. Guess he's right too. I seem to make a mess of everything. The kid's better off not to spend even his vacations with me. I'll just cut loose again."

Dan heard a sound that made him look around.

"Why, Miss Janet, you're crying. Don't worry about me."

"Oh, Daniel, it isn't only about you, but what you said upset me. I didn't mean to tell any one till some certain news should come but it's three days now. I can't bear to read the papers. I can't bear to look at my mail. Every knock at the door makes me fear a dreadful telegram. Look at this." She fumbled in her pocket. "It was what made me feel so ill the other day and I've kept it to myself. The trouble over our land that the Newbolds are back of seemed bad enough but then I opened the other letter and it was this:—"

She handed him the letter from Mr. Goodrich of the Surety and Trust Company.

Dan read it thoughtfully and tried to reassure Miss Janet but "no news in two months" could not be explained away.

At four o'clock that afternoon the up-train trundled across the Bonnet bridge carrying a crowd of sullen men, half-sobered, back to Philadelphia. They were still grumbling because the world was not a place in which people might loaf and lollop all day long and draw full pay for doing it. They never came to Blue Heron Island again.

The Big Boss had seen them off and he was turning back toward Montague Beach when Miss Janet Price came hurrying out to the road.

"Daniel, look at that great thunder cloud up there. Not a sign of those children yet. Some say they saw them leave the dock this morning headed for the main channel. I thought Roger had his sneakbox out of water

for repairs. Wasn't there something wrong that afternoon they reached the dock so late?"

"Yes, they'd stove in a place in the boat. I told the kid not to go across the main channel any more if he couldn't manage any better. But he didn't act as if he heard. There's been something on his mind. He's been tinkering up the *Susan* and must have got her in the water, whether she was sea-worthy or not."

Dan decided not to go to Montague until the 4.35 came along, which was the 3.40 returning after it met the city train at Cranberry. Instead he went down to the dock and questioned the regular hangers-on. They were Blue Heron folks and others of the summer colony who dangled legs and fishlines over the old green timbers all day long. But they had not been present when the *Susan* left. They had been up at Bissell's hearing about "that row you had at the quarters."

However they knew Roger had got his boat in the water just after breakfast. Others thought they saw a sail about ten o'clock tacking round Big Bonnet, making naw'west.

Along the cove people were getting ready for the thunder storm that now blotted the sun and boomed out heavy warnings. Houseboats took in the washing that waved all day above the cabin roofs. Yachts came scudding in. Fishermen rolled up their reels, and everybody made ready to run for shelter.

Miss Janet Price by this time was so anxious that every one in the house was aware of it. She called to Dan as he came back from the dock and drew him into the dining-room.

"Did you learn anything? Do you know where they went?"

"No. Where have they been going lately, Miss Janet?"

"They've been going on long trips, Daniel, all up and down the bay. You know you thought it safe in the *Susan* after the dear child learned to swim and they were very happy and for many reasons it seemed best to me to have them out. I always put up a nice lunch with my own hands and Roger promised me again and again to start home if the least bit of wind threatened. Oh, what do you think has happened?"

"I don't think anything has happened to make you look so scared. But if I knew where they went I'd just borrow Cap'n Pharo's yacht and chase 'em up. They may have got stuck in some out-of-the-way place or they may be waiting for this storm to pass—the mainland's getting it now; see that curtain of cloud. I don't think it will bother us much here. But where are they, that's the question."

"I wonder," said an insinuating voice at Dan's elbow, "if this would help you any."

It was Mrs. Piffington extending a paper, a worn, shabby, and crumpled sheet of cheap letter paper with writing on it.

"What's this and where did it come from?"

Mrs. Piffington felt that she had brought things to a crisis.

"It's a document, Mr. Smith, which I suspect of having deep and hidden meaning. Perhaps you know what it means yourself, perhaps you do not. It may be written in code. I don't wish to make any direct accusations or

draw in the innocent or worthy, but I saw a paper pass from hand to hand, and yesterday afternoon, as I was coming through the pantry for a glass of water, I saw your brother hide it under the meat block. I extracted it with a hairpin and it is now before you."

Dan had stared hard at Mrs. Piffington during this speech and he looked dubiously at the paper. As the lowering sky outside made it dark in the room he took the paper to the doorway to read.

Miss Janet thought he would never stop looking at it. She stood by, twisting her apron and listening to the surf which boomed loud in the hushed intervals between thunder mutterings. Mrs. Piffington was impatient too. She expected a great triumph in being able to say to everybody, "Haven't I told you so from the very first?"

However, he only folded it carefully and put it in his pocket.

"Miss Janet, I don't just understand what's up but this lets in a little light on where those kids have gone. I'll see what Cap'n Bill says to letting me take his boat."

"Do you dare start now?" faltered Miss Janet, peering out at the gray, choppy water of the bay.

"Sure thing. The *Wagtail* will be all right with three reefs tied and the motor engine to fall back on."

That was all very well to tell Miss Janet but Cap'n Bill Pharo advised Dan not to risk it.

"You're welcome to the *Wagtail*, Dannie, now or ever, and I'd trust your handling of her as soon as ary chap on this island but that cloud's got wind in it."

Dan was determined to start.

"Then I'll get my oilskins and jest come along to shift ballast for ye," said Cap'n Bill.

But Cap'n Bill Pharo did not go out on Swallow Bay that afternoon.

Amidst the rumble and darkness of the approaching storm the 4.35 down-train had come and gone. Miss Janet saw it from her window. Dan and Cap'n Pharo felt the dock vibrate and glanced over their shoulders at the string of coaches pulling out, just as they clambered into the *Wagtail* to make her ready for rough sailing.

It took some time to lace the reefing-points through their eyelets and pull in the billowing canvas.

Drops of rain were falling now and a curtain of mist had dropped over the bay.

A man came running bareheaded down the dock road. He did not slacken his pace on the planks of the old wharf, never stopped, in fact, till he made a leap and landed on the bow of the *Wagtail*, with his arm round the mast. She was straining on her cable and he had to clear three feet of water to land on her bow.

The two men in oilskins let their hands drop and stared at him—a tall, well-set-up man in city clothes—an excited man who shouted as he leaped aboard:

"Bill Pharo, it's no use for you to go. Three will only get in each other's way—two can handle her better. Have you got her reefed? Give me the tiller. Dan Smith, you handle the motor. Here, let me have your oilskins, Pharo."

"What in consternation——" began Cap'n Bill. He gazed at the bareheaded stranger through narrowed lids as he would peer across the bay at a sail, many miles away, which he thought he recognized.

CHAPTER XXV

TREASURE

ON Crooked Point the storm had been a long time getting ready and then with a rush of wind and an ear-splitting clap, it began.

A moment before the first drop fell Roger's pick had rung on something besides turf, something hard, that resisted his blow.

They had tugged so long at the tough soil and been so tormented by mosquitoes, gnats, and flies and stifled by the hot, close air that that first great swoop of wind seemed delicious. It tossed the gnats sky-high and it cooled their necks and faces. They were conscious of this without really thinking of it for they were too excited to think.

"Sadie, Sadie, it's *It*."

They jumped down into the hole, only about three feet deep, and began to delve like sandbugs. But on their backs fell big splashes—just a few, then many, patterning hard. The wind came wilder than ever; it tore and banged things round Pirate Pinneo's house, doubled the bushes over, and slung in the eyes of the treasure seekers sand, dust, and chaff. Next came the rain in torrents.

Sooner than it takes to say it their excavation turned into a well of water.

There was nothing for it now but to run. They ran to Pirate Pinneo's back door, dug the key out of the crack

where they had hid it and stumbled inside, to push their backs against the door to hold it shut.

My! What a racket the storm raised round that shanty! It made sounds on the shingles overhead like beating carpets. The elbow of stovepipe seemed to be repeatedly cracking its funny-bone, and down came a little stream of water, drip, spatter, into the dark interior somewhere. Meanwhile the thunder spoke in sharp, loud claps that followed quickly one upon another.

Stephanie stood with her back against the door and squeezed her eyes shut and dug her fists into her ears, for she was afraid of thunder. By and by she heard Roger shouting.

"You don't need to hold the door, I've got it fastened."

She opened her eyes and there was the candle lit on the copper-topped table. There were the chests, the stove, the strange cutlery, the state-room fittings, and the wall full of cupboards. Water was dripping from the roof in several places. The stuffy little room smelled of wet shingles and mouldy cracker boxes, and always faintly of the sea.

Roger shouted, "Let's go into the boat part," and led the way.

In there Stephanie sat down on a red plush chair and would do nothing but stop up her ears as long as the sharp thunder lasted. Roger took a chair opposite and they had time now for those curious thoughts that come when people who have been rushing actively about are compelled for awhile to quietness. How strange a place this was to be in. The room was in twilight from the storm except during lightning flashes. It might almost be a real ship with waves hissing on the deck. How the

rain beat! Would they ever get away? It was now almost Blue Heron supper-time. There would be a pleasant clink of dishes in Price's dining-room. But between there and here stretched three miles of rough water, and another mile of empty marsh. Nobody knew where they were. If anything should happen—— Supposing Pirate Pinneo, when dark fell, came out of hiding in the woods, came to see who had disturbed his ring of shells and uncovered his buried treasure to the rain?

Roger jumped up. "Do unstop your ears. The thunder only growls down cellar now. Do you know what I'm going to do? I'm going up to the lookout."

"The storm will fall on you."

"Don't care. I've got to get out there and see what's going on. No, don't you come. It's pouring."

Roger tried to go through the trap door without letting in the weather but failed; a bucketful of water tumbled in at once. He had some trouble fastening the trap behind him and his partner down below wished that he had left it ajar, for now she seemed entirely deserted. She sat and thought of stories Roger had told her about sole survivors shut up tight in wrecked ships from which the fresh air gradually leaked away.

It was not really long before another bucketful of water descended, followed by a pair of waving legs and then Roger himself.

"Can't see anything. The rain's coming down thick. Just look at my clothes."

Never in their after lives did either of them read of shipwreck or marooning without seeing the light fall grayly through little round, high windows upon a row

of chests and cabinets against the wall; never did mouldy smell fail to bring it all back to them.

They tried to look at the toys and curios but they could not see them plainly.

"If it rains much longer we cannot see."

"If it rains much longer we'll have to stay all night."

"We have here no beds."

"Nor anything to eat."

"Miss Janet should worry."

"And Dan won't get the money. I thought we'd have handed it to him before now. Wonder what he's doing. Wonder if the men got fresh again. Wonder what Brother Morwood will do to him. Sadie, if Dan runs away again, do you know what I mean to do? I shall simply pack up something and follow him. Yes, I'll just run away too."

Stephanie began to whimper. She was tired, wet, and frightened.

"No, no, Roger. You shall not run. My giant shall not run. I got to have somebody. My *Herr Vater* forgets to come and now you too must go, and Dan must go, and my stockings are all wet and it gets so dark here and I must cry."

"No, you don't!" exclaimed Roger desperately. "See here, I think your father's a poor fish, the way he treats you and if I ever see him I'll punch him."

"Ach, no! Ach, no!" wailed Stephanie. Roger had said the wrong thing to pacify her.

"Well, but if we get the treasure Dan won't run away anyhow. And you know my pick struck something just before this pesky-mean storm came along. And I'm pretty sure we can get home to-night and then come back

to-morrow to finish. So brace up. Do please brace up, Sadie."

Sadie only huddled herself in the chair and rocked and drew gurgling breaths.

Roger might have scolded and said he was wetter than she was and just as hungry and mosquito-bitten and tired and worried. But he had grown fond of this funny little Sadie who had been his constant companion all summer.

On several occasions when he had gone off with Blue Heron boys instead of her he found they didn't suit him half so well. All right for a day's fishing but you couldn't interest them in anything that wasn't in front of their noses. Sadie had really kept up her end generally. This was the first crying she had done since that first night he saw her and she had been hurt or scared several times enough to upset most girls. Things were certainly bad here. It wouldn't take much more to make him act silly himself.

"See here, Sadie, you really mustn't cry, you know. It isn't fair and it makes me feel worse and it doesn't do any good. You know what Dan told you the other day—that you were getting to be a regular all-round sport. He wouldn't say that if he could see you now. Listen. You don't want to be like one of those Bradshaw kids, that yell when they see a sandbug, do you?"

"N-no."

"Course you'd hate to. Well, now, I know what. It isn't raining so much and we'll both go up on deck and stay in the lookout till it clears. That's better than down here and we can pretend it's a ship and as soon as we can see Three-bar Light we'll skip over to the Crick,

empty out the *Susan* and get home some way. Come on. Up you go."

Only light drops fell on their faces as they came out under the sky. The storm was rumbling off to the southwest. Not a breath of wind stirred and twilight was falling over the lonely marsh, sodden and still.

They stopped on the roof, holding out their hands to feel the rain, glancing toward the grove with its motionless wet branches and at the darkening sky. Water dripped from the shanty eaves. A cricket somewhere in the grass tuned up squeakily. Sharp in this dead quiet a new sound fell.

Out there on the point metal rung on hollow wood:—*blim blam*.

Stephanie grabbed Roger and their hearts seemed to turn over. They could see nothing because the little deckhouse loomed between. Again the sound:—*blim blam!*

In after years there came a time when Roger blushed if the word pirate was spoken. "Aw, forget it," he would say. "I wasn't scared that night. I didn't really think 'twas ghosts." But at this moment he remembered a ballad called "The Lady Hannah"—for Hannah's ghost guarded a treasure chest of Captain Kidd's:

"But when they ceased, and Captain Kidd
Came down the sands of Dead Neck Isle
'My lady wearies,' he grimly said,
'And she would rest awhile.

"'I've made her a bed—'tis here, 'tis there
And *she shall wake*, be it soon or long,

Where grass is green and wild birds sing
And the wind makes undersong.

“‘ But if a lover would win her gold,
And his hands be strong to lift the lid,
‘Tis here, ‘tis there, ‘tis everywhere—
In the Chest,’ quoth Captain Kidd.”

Then they heard voices, and they were men’s voices. Somehow they made their feet carry them forward to the little deckhouse where they could peer through its spattered windows toward the point.

Out there in the open a dark figure straightened up and outlined itself against the horizon, very tall,—then another.

The rain had ceased entirely and now the clouds lifted slightly. Outlines everywhere became clearer in the dull reflection of the afterglow of sunset.

“ Why ! ” said Roger shakily. “ Sadie, that’s—that’s Dan.”

It seemed as if Roger tumbled bodily through the trap-door. Other doors slammed and his shout sounded outside, betraying a quaver left over from the fears now banished and forgotten.

“ Hay—ay—ay—ay ! Dan ! ”

What was Stephanie doing while Roger rushed to join his brother ? She stood alone in the dark little turret, facing its eastern window, a figure turned to stone. Who was that other man ? What was this that pressed upon her heart ? A thought, a fear—Heaven knows what came into her mind in that next stretch of time.

Three figures upon the landscape now, grouping them-

selves this way and that; three persons coming toward the house, their voices booming in the silence. Footsteps, clatter, calling voices. "Why she must be up there yet!" Bumping and thumping of feet upon the ladder.

A voice said, "Wait! I want to find her myself." Then close by the door of the deckhouse it said again, "My little daughter——"

How did she move herself to turn? He must have seen the shadow of her head against the window for he gave that little charming laugh and caught her in his arms.

"*Herr Vater.*"

"My precious, my little girl, would you mind saying daddy?"

CHAPTER XXVI

SEVERAL PEOPLE OUT OF SORTS

SEVERAL persons at Cap'n Price's went to bed in a disgruntled mood that night.

Mrs. Piffington, Mr. Beagle, Mrs. Bradshaw, and the lady from Philadelphia sat around the parlor lamp until ten o'clock waiting for things to be explained.

The lady from Philadelphia had declared that she must find some other place to spend her summers. She could no longer feel secure at Blue Heron. "I might better stay in Rittenhouse Square; we have labor troubles and suspicious characters in my own city," she said aggrievedly, as if these were the very things she had come to the seashore to find but thought she would do still better at home.

"I feel shaken also, deeply shaken," said Mrs. Piffington. "Why don't we have things explained to us? I thought everything would be cleared up when I handed that incendiary document to Miss Janet Price this afternoon but instead Dan Smith seizes the paper, flies down to the dock and sails away in a rising thunder storm. He has not yet returned. What has happened? I understand he will be discharged because of trouble with his workmen. I am sure *I* would not work for a young man who keeps a pistol and a blackjack in his second bureau drawer, as I saw with my own eyes one day when I had to close the windows because of a draft from that room. He did not explain the paper to Janet Price

and it was a most alarming document, full of code signals, and " (turning to the lady from Philadelphia) " it was concealed under the meat-block close by your chair in the dining-room. And then to make things more complicated, came the strange man."

" Strange man, strange man! " ejaculated Mr. Beagle testily. He had been pretending to read the paper while the ladies talked. " I hear constantly of a strange man turning up here this afternoon but I haven't seen him. Haven't met the fellow. What's his name? Who is he? Where'd he come from? Where is he now, I'd like to know? "

" That is what we beg you to tell us, sir. All I know is that just before the storm broke I heard a great commotion downstairs, like some one having hysterics. I rushed down as fast as I could and found Janet Price acting light-headed. Yes, I use the word advisedly—she's been so ever since. A straw hat and a light over-coat were flung over the banister and a large valise stood on the floor. I looked out of the door and saw a person running toward the dock. Janet Price, as you all know, put Dutch Cleanser into the supper biscuits instead of soda, forgot the napkins, burned the chowder, and let poor Cap'n come to the table without his coat. And she didn't show the least nervousness over these distressing blunders—merely beamed at one and all. Mrs. Bradshaw, you say you saw the man? "

" Oh, yes, when I ran down to bring in the baby's carriage I heard some one say very excitedly, ' I can't wait, I can't wait! Whoever's gone after her, I'm going too! ' And a man without any hat on burst out of the door and started running toward the dock."

Mr. Beagle had never told any one about reading Miss Janet's two letters the day she fainted. He was ashamed of it, and beside he was puzzled and worried. That New York letter with its references to Harpoons, to German cruisers, and to information which would be forwarded to Blue Heron later—all this made the apoplectic old gentleman feel quite nervous and muddled in his mind. Was there really mischief afoot? Were there plots at Price's where he'd been coming every summer for six years? Mrs. Piffington's hints about the little girl he had taken with a grain of salt. That woman was always stirring up something. One year she had convinced everybody that the artesian well had germs in it; another time it was blackhanders disguised as fruit and vegetable men. He had joined in this year's scheme more as a sort of game, which everybody understood, for prying into other people's business. But a letter was different. That New York letter came from the office of a prominent banking house.

He jerked his newspaper and moved his chair irascibly. "Good-looking man? Good-looking? Good-looking? I've seen some smooth rascals in my time. He could carry a bomb in his pocket, couldn't he, if he did wear a fancy suit? Where's he gone? When's he coming back? I don't like this place any more. Doesn't agree with me. I'm going to look up time-tables in the morning."

The lady from Philadelphia said she had decided on the 3.40 on Wednesday and the other ladies spoke of trains that they would take at an early date, and all went to bed in a bad humor.

Still another person of that household retired to rest

feeling that the world was out of joint. This, sad to say, was Roger Smith.

Cap'n Bill Pharo's yacht, with the *Susan* in tow, did not come to port till a late hour. It had taken almost as long to get everybody off Crooked Point as it had taken the rescuing party to get in. That afternoon the rescuers, after a squally crossing, had waded through all the quags and bogs on that portion of the Jersey shore. They had at last spied a forlorn gray building and struck upon newly-turned soil, spades, a pick, and a hole half-filled with water which they sounded with the pick.

What happened then has been told already and what happened after that was a complicated departure from Crooked Crick and a long trip home, under canvas, because the motor engine in Cap'n Bill's yacht refused to work.

Twice before they left the Point, Roger had protested to his brother :

"Dan, couldn't we wait just long enough to—to finish our excavation?"

"That hole out in front of the shanty? Certainly not. Haven't you done enough foolishness for one day? You'll give an account of yourself later but now show me where your boat is stowed and I'll see if it will take Mr. Rand and me besides you two, out of this swamp."

"Who is Mr. Rand?" asked Roger curiously.

A little later as they were ready to set off Roger said, "I left the pick and shovels. I expect to come right back to-morrow."

"No, you won't come back to-morrow. Gather every-

thing together and be quick about it. We're all cold and wet. Mr. Rand had to swim for it out there."

"Dan, who *is* Mr. Rand?" demanded Roger a second time. The behavior of the mysterious stranger was becoming queerer and queerer. Not only queer, but as the trip went on, offensive and distasteful to one member of the party. In fact Roger sat in the stern of the *Wagtail* and glowered through the dark, and derived his only comfort from snorting over and over to himself, "Who is the fellow and what's he doing here?"

This unknown and unwelcome person had appeared on Crooked Point with Roger's own brother, Dan, both of them in oilskins and both exceedingly wet and muddy. Roger had paid little attention to the stranger—merely some one whom his brother had brought along to help rescue himself and Sadie. But the stranger was not to be ignored. He kept saying excitedly, "Where is she? Where did you say? I want to find her myself. Up on the roof? Where is the roof? Quick! Hurry! I want to find her at once!" Not a word about how he came there, or about Pirate Pinneo's house, or the storm or anything except "her." As Sadie was the only "her" around Roger had showed him the ladder and up he sprang as if the house were on fire.

The *Susan* made its way down-crick with the two men walking along the bank most of the way. Then they all boarded the *Wagtail*, taking the *Susan* in tow, and there Roger felt that the stranger's behavior was becoming highly distasteful. He acted as if Sadie belonged to him, making her sit beside him in the forward end of the yacht, where they whispered together.

As Dan would do nothing but sail the boat in silence,

Roger spoke to Sadie herself. Had he not been giving her advice and counsel all summer?

"Sadie, you better come back here by Dan and me and watch Dan steer. It's a good chance to learn how to tell the channels in the dark."

Instead of the person addressed the intruder answered up. "Were you speaking to this little girl? She's fast asleep here against my shoulder, all worn out by the discovery she's made to-day."

Discovery? Roger repeated gloomily to himself. They had discovered nothing yet and it began to look as if they never would—as if their most promising plan, founded on definite writing and almost carried through, might be spoiled, busted, smashed. For if Dan remained stubborn and Sadie went back on him, went off with this stranger who might be one of her queer Hoboken relatives, but anyway Roger had no use for him—why it just put the kibosh on everything.

When, in their room, Dan attempted to ask questions and scold a little more, Roger turned stubborn on his side.

"You needn't talk, Dan Smith, and you needn't try to find things out. I've asked you about sixteen questions about that black-haired guy in the blue serge suit and you haven't answered one of 'em. Now it's my turn."

Dan laughed a little.

"Son, you'll know all about that gentleman soon. To-morrow morning probably. He said he'd have to find the best way to untangle Miss Janet first and let people know she wasn't responsible for the deception."

"To-morrow morning? I'll be somewhere else to-morrow morning. I'll be in the *Susan* sailing for

Crooked Point and you needn't try to stop me. I been all the time just working to help *you* and we did strike something wooden and if you could see a certain paper you'd sing a different tune and there's clam shells in a square inside a circle and I'm going to do this thing up thorough to-morrow morning."

"Don't holler. You'll wake up Cap'n—and he's about the only person in this house that hasn't had nervous prostration to-day. He stayed at the station-house and played checkers through everything. Cap'n Bill just told me so when he came down to see if we brought the *Wagtail* in all safe. Now go to sleep, Boxer."

CHAPTER XXVII

"IN A TRUNK IN A KAIG"

ROGER slept fitfully all night and at dawn he rose quietly and tip-toed from the house.

The *Susan* lay next Cap'n Pharo's *Wagtail*. She had lost some of her belongings in Crooked Crick and must be put in order before another all-day trip. It was going to be a lovely morning, clear and cool. The bay and the sleeping village lay in the smiling emptiness of early day. He had the whole world to himself.

But not for long, for while he spread his sail to dry and the *Susan* sagged back and forth under the dock rafters a voice hailed him softly from above and Dan swung into the little boat.

"Boxer, will you take me along? Say no if you feel like it."

Roger looked doubtful. "How d'you know where I'm goin'?"

"How'd I know anything? Kid, look here. You gave me an awful scare yesterday and I'd had a hard day, and then I felt sore not to be able to render up at once to Mr. Rand what he first entrusted to me. You don't know what I'm talking about—— Well, the point is this—— Forget and forgive the grouch I had on last night and take me along to hunt that treasure. You know I have the document—— Here it is. Mrs. Pif-

fington saw you shove it under the meat-block. She thinks you and Highness are running a gunpowder plot. But when I saw old Pinneo's name I guessed where you'd gone. You weren't exactly easy to find though, by hump! The storm caught us at Bonnet Islands and if Mr. Rand hadn't known this bay as well as I do we'd have swamped the *Wagtail*. When we'd got across Big Channel we didn't know where to land and the land we did strike seemed to be mostly water. But we went through the swamp someway before dark came, struck inland and stumbled on your diggings.” Dan sighed and mopped his face. He had seated himself in the stern of the tiny boat with his knees humped up like a daddy-long-legs. “By that time I wasn't speaking much. When he asks, ‘Did you say they go off on trips like this every day?’ I simply held my lip. Might have answered back ‘You went on a trip yourself,’ but I didn't. He took the spade and drove it into the hole which was partly filled with water, and it thumped on some hard surface. Then you came running out. Well, I suppose her Highness will soon be leaving us for good. If I get my walking papers that won't make much difference to either of us. You'll go back to Brother Morwood and I'll cut loose somewhere. Never mind—let's go hunt treasure. For whatever moonshine led you to it I half-believe this time you've struck oil.”

Roger understood that this long speech was meant to make up for last night's curtness and he held out his hand.

“Shake! Of course you can go. But, Dan, who is Mr. Rand?”

At this moment steps sounded on the dock and a

shadow that fell along the wharf was made by the new risen sun shining on the very person Roger spoke of.

"Hullo, boys."

He stood there laughing down at them and they forgave his spotless flannels, his being a stranger, and all other counts against him because of that very laugh. For they were both young lads and he was a charming man of the world accustomed to win people when he wished.

"I say—you fellows are early. But I saw you from my window and guessed what was up and who was up. I didn't sleep well last night at the hotel and woke before day thinking of that document Dan showed me yesterday—which we didn't either of us think much of yesterday except as our only guide to the missing. You're off to Crooked Point this morning—aren't you? I knew it. Please take me along. I never went treasure hunting in my life——" He interrupted himself and his face changed. "Yes, I went treasure hunting yesterday afternoon and found it. But that document has set me studying and I think—— Dan, won't you persuade your brother to take me along?"

Mr. Rand and Dan exchanged a questioning look, each wondering what was in the other's mind about the document. Roger thought a minute.

"I'd just as soon you'd go, but you see, there isn't room in the sneakbox; besides——" He hesitated and then came out loyally, "I don't think it's right for this whole crowd to go and have the fun of finding whatever's there and leave out Sadie."

For a moment Mr. Rand couldn't think who Sadie was.

"He means——" began Dan laughing.

“Oh, I see,” said Mr. Rand, but instead of laughing he looked sober, as his thoughts went back to a pile of letters and something else Mr. Boals had handed him in New York the other day.

“I left word last night with Miss Janet to let her rest this morning. She was so tired I was worried. That little girl——” He looked at Dan, who knew at least part of the story—and flushed like a boy. It was as if he felt the need of making a confession. “The time of indifference or carelessness on my part to that little girl has gone by forever—forever.”

“I understand, sir,” said Dan.

Roger, however, didn’t know what they were talking about and didn’t see the point of wasting time in expressing sentiments.

“You should worry about Sadie. Rest! *She* doesn’t need any rest. Why, what kind of a training do you think I’ve given her? She’s been round with me all summer and done everything—fallen overboard, eaten poison pokeberries, burned *all* the skin off her arms and face. Hasn’t she, Dan? Little business like yesterday wouldn’t make her wink. I’ll go call her; she’d feel awfully to be left out.”

But he was saved the trouble.

Down the road at that moment a small figure came flying.

Roger, standing in the boat, caught sight of her first and said, “Here she is now.” They all watched the dark head bobbing along above the bushes beside the road, and then she came out in the open and on the dock, but her feet beat a slower tune when she saw who stood there.

Mr. Rand saw a little girl in a dark cotton middy suit, much soiled and mussed. Her legs were bare to-day and, oh, but they were brown! She wore no hat; the morning light fell on her dark braids, which were all fuzzy curls (for they were yesterday's braids) and on her brown, slim, keen little face. On the eyebrows Miss Janet had said were like his. On the eyes, which, as she drew near, rested on his with a kind of rapturous suspense. Was this *Herr Vater* in the morning light or was it Daddy?

He held out his arms and she sprang into them.

Roger and Dan looked on from the boat below. To Roger Mr. Rand turned and said laughing, "Roger, on the seventeenth of last March a little German Countess in beautiful white silk clothes went out to ride with your brother and I never saw her again. Instead I find Sadie—— What is it? Wienerwurst? A real authentic, orthodox American child and my daughter. You mustn't tell it right away, until I have time to straighten out Miss Janet Price's reputation for truth with her boarders and the village. So don't mention her real name to any one else but practise using it yourself for I hate the other almost as much as Miss Janet does. This is Stephanie Rand."

Now it must be recorded that though Roger did finally, after much explaining, understand, it was long, long before he could quite get over it. Even the events of that day, gratifying and most important though they were, could not make him fully reconciled that his partner, Sadie, was somebody else and had been somebody else ever since he had known her. Others had known the truth but he had been deceived, "stung," he told himself.

Many things had to happen to his liking before he quite recovered from this grievance.

Cap'n Nummy's boat *Ada* sailed across the bay and lay off Crooked Point at anchor. Cap'n Nummy did not know this till later, but neither he nor Cap'n Bill Pharo had any fault to find when Alan Rand settled up with them. He was always like that, cheeky but free-handed, they recalled. Neither did Miss Janet mind that her ice-box had been plundered; she would have let him chop up the house for kindling-wood this day to suit his fancy.

The *Ada* lay empty, riding at anchor on water the color of gentians. The bogs of Crooked Point laughed at the blue sky; they were ruffing lakes to-day in the midst of an emerald park of meadows. Snipe rose from the sedge; blackbird, thrush, and sparrow sang in the bushes. And the voices of four impetuous persons drove away the last suggestion of loneliness from Pirate Pinneo's domain.

Did the sap of feminine curiosity stir in the wooden lady's head? Or was it only a breeze in the young oak, which had grown up in her line of focus, that made her seem to peek and crane through its branches at the group of persons round the spot she had sentineled so long?

“Do you know,” said Mr. Rand staring at the house and round on every side, “now I see this place by daylight something comes back to me. That building is a queer affair—I don't remember it—but there was an old shooting ground on one of these points that we used to come to, Stephen Price and I. Poor Steve, the finest,

kindest fellow in the world, something the build of Dan Smith here. He was like a big brother to me." Mr. Rand glanced at his daughter suddenly, "You should have known big Steve—I always meant you to, and when I picked on Blue Heron for you he was in my thoughts, besides the Cap'n and Miss Janet. I thought one thing would make up to him for all my long neglect. Yes, I believe this is the very spot and that building must stand on the site of a little shack we put up."

"That building is partly an old shack," said Roger.

"I must look at it by and by. We used to camp out there in March. And wait! I believe we named our shack 'The Pirates' Own' after a book we had been reading. We were just outgrown kids, you know. I worked in an office in Philadelphia and was alone in the world. Steve was a fine fellow. He had traveled up and down the coast on Cap'n Price's boats, the *Lizzie M.* and the *Garland*, and had been away at school. His father wanted him to beat Cap'n Newbold's boys—the old chap he had the feud with. Dan, let me see that paper. I didn't really read it yesterday."

"The stuff is were the figger is alookin' in a trunk in a kaig."

Mr. Rand standing at the edge of the clam-shell ring read Pirate Pinneo's document aloud:

"I alis intent to giv it up but sorta let it go till I herd they dug up the old mark and haf lawiers. No lawier wont fine me they needunt to look. I ain't a pirit. Foks may say all they will I never told no boat in so help me.

One skuner was a frensh bark of wines I lug tu frensh fellers out the serf myself. The goods in this house if ary person can find oners or clams of wrecked vessels *Count Pulasko, Osceola, or John C. Calhoun* are welkim. I had my use and also plesure from same but a bad conshins is a uneesy mate and this mash does not agree with my helth any more. Enny way Cap'n got fooled. He sesee Fishhooks is about his size sesee,

“Fairwell to all,

“PHINNEAS PINNEO.”

Over the last words of the letter Mr. Rand glanced up at Dan and they gave each other a look which said as plain as words, do you think as I do and could it possibly be true?

Dan dropped on one knee and looked into the hole. Last night's rain was drained away but mud had washed into the bottom.

“Did you two get out all this meadow sod alone?”

“You bet we did and it was beastly hard work. I had to cut roots with my pocket knife.”

“And the hotness and mosquitoes and greenheads, they are *fierce*.” Every time she used words like this Mr. Rand turned on his daughter a glance of keen amusement. “But the storm comes and we must beat it.”

Dan took a spade and prodded.

“There is some hard surface at the bottom of that hole.”

Now the men fell to in earnest with pick and spade. Roger ran and brought some of Pinneo's whaling implements. Handing a hooked piece of iron to his one-time partner he said with stiff politeness:

"Perhaps you might care to help with this." Stephanie stared at him, greatly puzzled by his formal manner which she had noticed already several times that morning, but she took the instrument and joined in tearing away roots and sod.

Soon they had widened the circle to the circumference marked with shells. Dan now stepped into the hole and scraped bare a surface, flat, wooden, made of closely-joined boards and surrounded by a circular ring. In short, it was the top of a great hogshead.

"Some 'kaig,'" remarked the giant dryly. He took up the pick. "What next? This may have been sunk here for a spring or reservoir and covered over later. Or it may be what that crazy letter seems to indicate. Shall we go on?"

"It's easy enough to say, go on, but that's an old wine cask, tough as iron. Who's going to open it?"

"Stand away and I'll just show you, sir."

Dan laid the pickax far back on his shoulder and brought it down with a stunning blow and crash. Again and again and again he lunged. A splintered opening gaped in the head of the old cask. He bent down, broke away some slivers and thrust in his arm.

"There is, in here, a small chest or box, something with square corners and it stands on end."

Nobody spoke while he finished demolishing the cask lid and laid bare the inside, which was intact and tight and contained nothing but a small, brown, hide-covered chest, such as travelers used in 1850.

He lifted it out and placed it on the ground. As the end came down every one heard a muffled sound, *chink chunk*.

Mr. Rand spoke up and in doing so went far in winning for himself a friend.

"I think Roger should be the one to open this box and examine its contents."

"And Sadie too," said Roger loyally, forgetting in that prodigious moment that Sadie was no more.

CHAPTER XXVIII

OTHER TREASURE

Two canvas bags lay under a tight mass of old newspapers and shavings, which Roger and Stephanie solemnly took out and sifted, before they came to the heavy objects in the bottom.

One was packed full, sewed across the top with twine, sealed and had a label inked upon it:

\$1000 T.N.

The other bag was tied around its middle. On both sacks printed words were faintly visible:

7
Plugman's
Improved
Chilled
SHOT
New York

7

"Shot-bags," said Dan and he took the half-filled sack in his hand. "But what's in 'em isn't shot. Do you think we might open this one?"

Mr. Rand nodded and Dan passed it to Roger whose hands trembled as he unclasped his jackknife. After a

moment of fumbling with the string he turned up the bag and poured the entire contents into Stephanie's lap.

Eleven pounds of gold and silver coins weighed down Stephanie's ankles as she sat cross-legged on the ground.

Outlandish money some of it was too. There were Portuguese dobras and moidores, silver escudos of Spain, Chinese coins with dragons on them, old trade dollars and Mexican silver, pieces stamped "San Francisco 1853," odd little one and three-dollar gold pieces.

They all spent some minutes handling it over and Mr. Rand said: "It might almost be the regulation pirate hoard after all."

What else should it be, thought Roger and Stephanie, but the thing they had been all these months in quest of? Roger whispered something in his partner's ear and she gave a little pleased nod. They gathered up the whole pile in four hands, Stephanie jumped up, and both stepped in front of Dan and held it out to him, grinning and making funny little bows.

"What's this?"

"It's for you. Allow us to present this money for you to take a course at the University of Pennsylvania."

"Yes, Giant, we hunt and we hunt and at last we have found, but always it is for you."

"Yes, 'nd we tried to get it yesterday in time for you to pay off your men."

"We hear you ask Mr. Bissell and Mrs. Piffington and they say No and Roger says you shall not be fired because of such tightwads and we jump in the *Susan* quick and sail away."

"Here take it, Dan, and the other bagful, too."

Dan stood looking from one to the other. Then he

glanced over at Mr. Rand and flushed and grinned shame-facedly. He took the four hands in one of his and doubled the fingers down over what they held.

"This what you two've been stewing and fussing over all summer? Digging and measuring and shooting off guns and jay-hawking all over Great Swallow Bay? Because you thought I needed money?"

"Yes."

"What was it you said I was to do with it? University of Pennsylvania?"

"Yes, Dan. I heard you say two years ago if only you could go and take a course in engineering you could get a good position, somewhere besides the Smith Company."

"And so you never shall run from Blue Heron away. And we too shall stay here, is it not, my Daddy?"

"Yes, if you want it so, dearest," said Alan Rand. He had been listening closely to this conversation.

Dan looked quite flustered. "I guess I'll have to leave here if they fire me, Highness. Aren't kids a funny set, Mr. Rand? Well, I thank you both for feeling so kindly to me but I have a hunch this money belongs to somebody else and Mr. Rand has the same, I guess, though I'd thank him to explain the how and why of it. Open up the other sack, Roger."

"Belongs to somebody else! You mean Pirate Pinneo? But Dan——"

"Open up the sack first."

The contents of the second bag, marked \$1000 T.N. were orderly and tame. They took out rolls of five, ten, and twenty dollar gold pieces, bundles of greenbacks and banknotes according to their denominations.

"That's all," said Roger.

He turned the shot-bag over and shook it; and out on the breeze fluttered a slip of paper, yellowed by time.

"Except this." He caught it and brought it near his spectacles.

"Why!" he said, "it's a check." He turned it over, read again, stared up at his brother as if his eyes would pop through his shell-rimmed goggles.

"I don't understand—— Dan, read this."

50-98. No. 250

SEAMEN'S BANK OF PHILADELPHIA

Philadelphia, Pa., April 10, '81

PAY to the order of *Thomas Newbold* \$35.50/100.
Thirty-five and fifty one-hundredths Dollars. In full
of account for fish and clams.

WILLIAM B. JONES.

"This settles it, I guess," said Dan and handed it to Mr. Rand.

"Yes, I think it does. But there's another way to prove it. Over on Blue Heron Island is an old man who can shut his eyes and reel off to us from memory the contents of those two bags, if I'm not mistaken. I haven't seen him yet; they say he's changed, but I believe he'll pass that test."

"You can bet he will," said Dan. "You'll find him out back of the station-house playing checkers with some fellow of the crew."

Miss Janet would never have let them go about things as they did. But Miss Janet had gone to Montague

Beach, since boarders must be fed even when a beloved prodigal comes home. The boarders too, by the time the *Ada* docked, had gone out on the beach or in the village. They felt more cheerful by morning light and even Mr. Beagle could not quite make up his mind to leave, while mysteries remained unsolved.

Cap'n Price's house stood open. To the Cap'n himself and Jake Headly of the crew, humped over their checker-board at the south side of the government building, appeared an impetuous messenger.

"Cap'n Price, excuse *me*, but you better come up to your house quick. Mr. Rand and Dan, they want to ask you something awfully private and important about that old trouble you had with Cap'n Thomas Newbold."

The Cap'n wrenched his thoughts from the king move he had been about to make.

"Who'd ye say, Rawger, sent me that 'ere word?"

"Mr. Rand and Dan. Mr. Rand's name is Mr. Alan Rand and I guess you knew him already long ago."

"Cap'n Bill told you last night he had come," put in Jake Headly.

"Yes, I know Alan Rand," said Cap'n Price, lifting his head to look through his spectacles at the others. "Not long ago. 'Tain't but a short time since Alan Rand was down." He seemed to wish that no one should dispute this and as they kept silent he folded his glasses and stood up—the tall, handsome, Roman-nosed old Cap'n.

They were waiting in the big dining-room. Stephanie's father rose quickly as the door opened and stepping forward put out his hand without a word. Indeed he could not at that moment speak.

The old man took it and held it, scanning the face before him with questioning eyes.

"You bean't——"

"Yes, Cap'n—— Alan Rand."

Cap'n Price drew his wrist across his forehead; the clouded look passed over his face and he sat down in a chair, gazing straight ahead. Mr. Rand and Dan be-thought themselves then and glanced apprehensively at the table nearby where something lay with a napkin thrown over it.

Mr. Rand spoke in a low tone. "I don't believe we'd better ask him any questions."

"What's that? Questions? You can ask me all you like—only wait a minute. You be Alan Rand, that little chap my son Steve set his eyes by?" Cap'n Aaron had not spoken of his son in many years. "Never mind, I see you're Alan grown older—like me, I s'pose—and Janey—and us all. I'm not what I was, Alan; you'll notice a great difference here. I don't run a store here any more and the post-office has been put elsewhere. I had a sight of trouble. I had enemies, you see, and the wust of that was, 'twas an old friend, a boyhood friend, that turned his hand against us. If ary person had told me ten years earlier that Tom Newbold would want to do me a dirty trick I'd ha' shut the feller's mouth for lyin'. Why us only about so high was friends, when his folks settled off the Main, and they was deer and foxes here. I shot a fox with father's gun and give the skin to Tommy for to make a cap and he took that cap in his chest when we sailed on the *Cape May Belle* together. I only staid a year but Newbold stuck by the sea above twenty year. It changed him mightily—changed him

into as orn'ry, close-fisted cuss as ere I see. He tried to cheat me out of the fair price of the *Lizzie M.*, claimin' she was seam-sprung, which she was not, but a sound, seaworthy boat. Why wasn't she insured when she went down? Why was she took out in a raging gale, I ask you, but for Cap'n Newbold's fear he'd lose a penny somewhere? Howsomever, I felt sorry, for he was beside himself—the way he talked right here in this room. Here was I beside the stove, there stood the meat-block and the cooler beyond, and I had my safe just where it now is. I says 'Tom,' I says, 'I can't listen to such talk from no one. That boat was sound. I'm sorry for your loss—you hadn't paid me the full price and you needn't now but I won't have such talk throwed at me,' I says. So I went upstairs—my wife was sick. When I went in to the safe next day them bags was gone."

The Cap'n sat back. He had been leaning forward, talking excitedly.

"Where's Janey? I guess I'm talking too much about this. She always wants to hesh me up."

"Cap'n Aaron, tell us, what was in the two bags? Do you remember?"

"Remember?" The Cap'n closed his eyes. "They was one bag contained a thousand dollars:—ten twenty-dollar bills, fifteen five-dollar bills, fifty one-dollar bills, two rolls of twenty dollar gold pieces (ten to a roll), one roll tens, two rolls fives, thirty-five-fifty in small gold and silver, and a check on the Seamen's Bank of Philadelphia for thirty-five-fifty.

"That was the price of the *Garland*.

"Tother bag only had four hundred and seventy-five

dollars in it, three hundred twenty-five short of what the *Lizzie M.* was worth at the closest figger, and I guess the money came out the toe of his stockin'. They was all kind of odd fish:—China money, Spanish and Porta-gee, Mexican dollars and 'Frisco money he picked up goin' round the Horn, a lot of little small gold pieces and some of those there silver trade dollars they used to circ'late on the Pacific in the seventies. I recollect a queer lookin' gold coin with eight sides to it."

They had all listened to this enumeration with bated breath and Roger made a motion to what lay on the table. But Dan shook his head at him.

"Cap'n Aaron," went on Mr. Rand. "Why were you certain that Newbold took the money?"

"I didn't want to think so, boy. But look here—I never locked only the inside of that safe and I used to hang the key in behind the safe. Two-three days before, when he brought the money over here, he went in there with me and saw me stow the bags away and saw where I hung the key. We never had much call to lock things, them days. The only feller round these parts with a name for thieving was this ere Pinneo that bached it by himself in a shanty on Boremus Beach—Pirate Pinneo some folks call him. They was quite a stir about him some while ago that he tolled boats ashore with a lantern and a mule, but I alliz laughed at that. No, there warn't a human being know'd where the key was at but Cap'n Newbold."

"This Pinneo—you say you laughed at him?"

"Phin Pinneo? Yes, I alliz laughed at *him*. He was a little whiffet; part for'ner, I reckon, and he'd walk in here with a kind of a biggity swagger and when he

thought they warn't ary person watchin' he'd thieve a han'ful o' coffee beans or maybe some nails. I let him have 'em. I says to him oftentimes, I says, 'Help yourself to fish-hooks, Phin, I guess you hain't got spine enough to take sinkers,' says I."

Mr. Rand laughed and held up his hand, "Take care, Cap'n. It's cost you fourteen hundred and seventy-five dollars, with interest, already, saying that."

"What say?"

"Never mind. I merely want to ask, did Pinneo move away from Boremus Beach?"

"Yes, over across onto the Main som'ers. He moved a passel o' goods in his garvey by nights, they say. Alan, I want to tell you all the trouble and bad blood that followed on that act of Thomas Newbold's."

"Cap'n Aaron, I hope you'll tell me sometime, but to-day there's a matter I want to lay before you. I believe Pinneo was capable of doing considerable more damage than you gave him credit for. I think that some way or other he must have seen your bags of money stowed away and found the key. I do, for—wait. Dan, that paper, please. Read it through, Cap'n Aaron. Take your time to it."

It seemed long that they watched him reading, getting its meaning with the slow grasp of the old. And then when he looked up at last Roger stood in front of him holding out two canvas sacks.

"Hey, what?" said Cap'n Price.

His hands shook. He took the bags slowly, looked around helplessly at the circle of young faces.

"Alan, you don't—don't mean to say Tom Newbold never stole it from me?"



The little girl came shyly to his side

"Yes, Cap'n Aaron, we know now it was this other man."

And then they felt terribly distressed—to see the white-haired old Cap'n cry.

Mr. Alan went over and sat down by him and said in a husky voice: "Don't feel so, Cap'n. We all make such big mistakes. I've just found out the terrible blunder of my life which I must tell you about sometime, and I did another wrong too. I let things come in and cut me off from you folks at Blue Heron and from my dear old Steve—your boy."

Cap'n Price said brokenly, "Steve might be here now—if I hadn't wronged Tom Newbold—— Tom grew to hate us all—he wouldn't lift his hand when Steve's boat rammed the dock——"

"Listen, Cap'n. I believe old Steve must know about this, to-day, and he wouldn't want to see you break down. And Miss Janet, think of her. Why, she'll do frightful things to us for troubling you. That's right. Cap'n, I do hope Steve knows about this, for I want him to know one thing especially. Come over here, Stephanie."

The little girl came shyly to his side.

"Cap'n, long ago when Steve and I were pals and built a little shack for camping, over on the Point—in fact, I believe there's part of it left near where this money was found—we made a vow to each other, and we sealed it with a lot of boyish ceremonies and solemn rites, meaning every word too. The vow was this:—We promised to name, each of us, our first-born child after the other. Steve, I understand, was unmarried. I don't doubt he would have kept his word. But anyhow, I did.

And here she is—my little Stephanie, Stephen Price's namesake."

The Cap'n put on his glasses again. His tears had left him trembling, but somehow his mind seemed clearer than it had been in many years.

He raised his head and looked long at Stephanie. And she was so surprised by what her father had just told her that she forgot to be frightened at the old man.

"Come here, my dear." He took her hand and patted it as he had done once before, and he smoothed back her dark hair.

"Stephanie. Is that the girl's name for Stephen? Alan, I'm very proud of this. She's a fine child, a sweet, pretty girl." He was silent a moment, then his eyes began to twinkle. "We had a girl round here all summer looked like this one. But I never could get the hang of what they called her—Winder-catch, it sounded like, as much as anything."

A loud sob startled every one in the room. There stood Miss Janet in a dark corner by the pantry door. How long she had been there with hat and jacket on and a fish basket on her arm nobody knew, but the sob was evidently an outburst of feelings she had been keeping pent up during the scene just past.

She set down the basket and waved at them all with her hands.

"Don't—don't trouble about me. I'm only crying for joy—especially to think that name is done with forever."

CHAPTER XXIX

MRS. PIFFINGTON RECEIVES A SHOCK

THE yacht *Harpoon* ran into foul weather off the northern banks, was driven out of her course and lay for many weeks on the barren coast of Labrador, disabled. The clubmen and sporting scientists who had gone out for a summer cruise found themselves facing ice bondage from the early, instantaneous winter of the north. It was August before a little steamer which infrequently patrols that coast brought help and set them free.

Mr. Rand's man-servant, Boals, who had been an elevator boy twenty-five years ago when Alan Rand worked in a Philadelphia office and first went to Blue Heron—this faithful, devoted Mr. Boals was on the point of himself fitting out a private arctic expedition to rescue his employer. However, he only went as far as Brooklyn. He had received a telegram from Boston that all was well and the *Harpoon* would arrive at a certain pier on Monday morning.

Only the August heat kept Boals from meeting Mr. Rand with rolls of blankets, condensed food, and other stores which he had gotten together with the idea of going north. He had in imagination so long been picturing arctic regions that he could not rid his mind of that thought and did actually carry on his arm to the Brooklyn pier this morning Mr. Rand's fur-lined overcoat.

One of the first things he said to Mr. Rand was:

"Have you sent word to Miss Janet Price, sir?"

"No. Has she been worried?"

"Mr. Goodrich telephoned she had written to him very anxious, and there's letters to you from Blue Heron waiting in your rooms."

Mr. Rand was in a great hurry to get those letters. Up on the wild north coast he had had plenty of time to think, and he had thought how, if they could not escape from the rocky bay they lay in, and winter starved them all he would die a stranger to his daughter. He thought of that day he parted from her and how she thought they were going to Coney Island and had touched his hair with her hand.

The wild life there reminded him too of Stephen Price, his pal, the fine big lad he had camped with, spring and summer, on Swallow Bay. In spite of opposition he had kept the boyish vow of naming his first-born for him, and now Steve's namesake lived under his roof-tree but Steve was gone.

He supposed Miss Janet had followed all instructions. He fancied he had helped them by his generous gifts of money. And yet every thought of Blue Heron made him as restless to go there again, as he had been careless and indifferent before.

On the desk in his room lay a great pile of mail. But Mr. Boals had sorted it and placed on the very top Miss Janet's cards and the letters in her writing. Mr. Rand took all the letters to an open, awninged window of his sitting-room. Just as he was ready to open the first letter his man-servant came to his side and held out something else.

"I found this, sir, in the pocket of your coat when I got it out of storage. It looked so shabby and queer I glanced into it to see if it was yours. I would look it over careful, Mr. Rand, if I was you."

There was something in the tone of Mr. Boals that made his employer glance at him, and he took curiously in his hand the small black pocket notebook with dog-eared, imitation-leather covers.

A sea breeze which had persisted valiantly past Staten Island and the Battery, and all the way up to Murray Hill, softly flapped the awning and quivered the geraniums and white alyssum in a flower box outside the window. Wheels and steam and gasoline and bells and horns clanged vigorously down below and dust whirled aloft. Still Mr. Rand read on and when he had finished reading sat intently still, staring into space.

Then suddenly he was all impatience.

"Boals! Throw some things into a bag, call a taxi, look up trains on the Pennsylvania. I'm starting for Blue Heron on the first train I can get. Hurry! I may be able to catch the afternoon express from Philadelphia."

Mr. Boals seemed to his employer provokingly slow in answering. He closed the window, laid out a Sunday paper, seemed to fiddle round the room.

"Why don't you get things ready and look up those trains?"

"Because I have already, Mr. Rand. A taxi's waiting. Your bag's all ready and here's folders for you. I took the liberty of thinking you would want to start at once." Then a trifle awkwardly, for even a privileged man may go too far, he stammered, "I think you'll be

glad. Miss Stephanie's a lovely little girl, sir. I've kept an eye on her these many years and only the other day was hearing again from—er—Miss Leona Adkins, who was employed, you'll remember maybe, at the Juilliard, how Miss Stephanie was a sweet affectionate little girl but very much neglected."

Mr. Rand was telling all this to Miss Janet Price shortly after Cap'n Price heard about the money, and he ended, laughing:

"The rest of my mail lies there on my desk yet. I never looked at it."

Cap'n Price had taken the treasure and gone to his own room "to write a letter." They guessed the letter was to Tom Newbold's wife and family, for he was feverish to atone for the old wrong. Dan had gone to Montague Beach. Roger had been told he might spread the story in the village and he softened towards his late partner sufficiently to urge her to go along, for the first telling of exciting news in which one's self figures prominently is a pleasure not to be despised.

Mr. Rand went on, "I did take time, however, to get in touch with the people who have kept informed about Stephanie's aunt and her son, Gustav. The Countess is back in Germany and I suppose her heart and soul are with that accursed nation in this war. There's no doubt Gustav, at least, is a thorough scoundrel. I know now he meant to get entire control of the child's fortune; beside spiriting her away to make a German subject of her. Well—we're rid of them."

Miss Janet's tears, once started, seemed to gush afresh at every piece of news.

"Mr. Alan, when I stood in this dining-room just now and so many things came over me, I kept myself in hand until I suddenly realized we need not call the dear child any longer by that shocking name. What do you think! You will hardly believe it but I found out yesterday the boarders were saying the dear lamb must be a German spy."

"Who said that?"

"Mrs. Piffington, from Paterson. I—I—don't wan't to express opinions about any guest under my roof but I really would like to call that woman something."

"Call her anything you like, Miss Janet. She certainly deserves it if she said such things about my little Stephanie after all the trouble we had to get her *out* of the clutches of the Germans. But we'd better say it behind her back for we have a ticklish situation here:—A houseful of boarders and a village full of neighbors to be told the whys and the wherefores of Stephanie Rand living in their midst as Sadie—what in time is it?—Wienerwurst. Now, how can it be managed?"

Miss Janet shook her head dubiously. "I'm sure I don't know, Mr. Alan, except to tell the truth."

After a moment's thought he answered: "I believe you're right. It *is* the only way every time. My great fear is a lot of publicity and notoriety for the child. But I don't believe Blue Heron folks would bring that about and probably the only city people who have seen much of her are your boarders here. What's the name of the lady you mentioned?"

"Mrs. Piffington—from Paterson."

"Is Mrs. Piffington from Paterson young or old? Never mind, she's a woman. Leave her to me, Miss

Janet. To-day I'll stay here at your house for dinner, so just seat me next her. Tell me about the others too."

After Miss Janet had described the rest of her household they spoke of other things:—Of the trouble with the Land Company, and of Miss Janet's anxiety over himself, and Mr. Rand took her to task for sending back the check, and then they came round again to Stephanie.

"If I had received your letters in time it might have done me good, but after all it was her journal that made me see what a blind fool I had been." He took from his vest pocket a flat, black pocket notebook with imitation-leather covers, and seemed about to show it to Miss Janet, then with a self-conscious laugh thrust it back again. "No, I couldn't let even you see this. It's my buried treasure that I've found."

The little old maid looked wistfully out of the door and across the sparkling bay.

"I knew the child loved you, Mr. Alan. She's a darling child. I've come to set great store by her. But it's always so with children that one loves; they come into one's life and go out again because they are some one else's possessions after all. But I do think it's been good for her here."

"Miss Janet, listen. Stephanie hasn't come into your life to go out again. She's to be near you or with you every summer that's coming—we've decided that together. Good for her here? I've been thinking of the true things in your letter and of my foolish plans to surround her down here at kind, simple old Blue Heron village with maids and governesses. She wasn't a real child in New York. She was a little air-plant—with nothing but poisoned air to live on at that. What have

you and Blue Heron and Dan and Roger made of her? A real first-class little girl, full of life and grit and health and play and whole-souled affection—a true little American—my daughter."

Mrs. Piffington met the other boarders in the village and told them each that she knew all about the new arrival. He was a Mr. Alan Rand of New York, a prominent banker. He had stayed at Cap'n Price's years ago. He was here to stay some time. How had she learned all this? Why, she had merely made a few inquiries at the hotel and the store. One thing was certain. Mr. Rand was a business man and therefore the one to consult about "this alarming and mysterious situation."

Everybody agreed to this but Mr. Beagle, who acted very nervous.

"Rand, you say? Name of Rand. Alan Rand, New York? Don't like the name. Don't want to hear about him? I'm going away. Atlantic City's good enough for me." He was sure Alan Rand was the name he had seen in that alarming letter, which he had read too hurriedly to get the hang of it but it looked queer, looked as if Price's were mixed up in something, and if this were the same man, why, worse and worse!

When the dinner-bell summoned Cap'n Price's household to their midday meal that day, there was Mr. Rand of New York standing behind the chair that was usually unoccupied, between Mrs. Piffington and Mr. Beagle. Miss Janet introduced him to every one. The Cap'n did not come to table and Roger and Stephanie were nowhere to be seen.

Mr. Rand seated Mrs. Piffington with nice courtesy and seemed to know instinctively that she preferred bread to crackers with her soup. Almost at once they began to talk of European travel. Mrs. Piffington beamed upon the newcomer.

Mr. Beagle had seated himself with sidelong looks of deep suspicion, but somehow before the meal was over he too was won. It turned out that Mr. Rand remembered his career in the New Jersey legislature. Mr. Beagle said aside to Miss Janet that this Mr. Rand seemed well-informed and up-to-date.

Mrs. Bradshaw with her brood and the lady from Philadelphia, at their separate tables, looked and listened and were also favorably impressed, as ladies are prone to be by a fine-looking man who seems properly gratified at meeting them.

Mr. Rand said he had come to Blue Heron for a special reason. He also hinted at important developments since he arrived. At this Mr. Beagle edged away a little, while Mrs. Piffington raised her eyebrows with meaning glances at the other ladies, which plainly said, "Is it possible he knows something already?"

As they rose from the meal Mr. Rand said: "If I may be allowed the pleasure of joining you on the upper veranda presently I would like to take you all into my confidence."

You may well believe the rocking-chairs on the gallery were filled immediately.

"I think he knows everything and has come to Blue Heron to rescue this household from a plot," whispered Mrs. Piffington to the others.

"He is certainly very agreeable. He spoke so kindly to the children," said Mrs. Bradshaw.

"He is undoubtedly related to the Rands of Germantown," said the lady from Philadelphia.

Mr. Beagle said nothing but "*Ahem!*" for there at the door stood the subject of their words—*arm in arm with the spy!*

Roger came just behind them and when he saw Mrs. Piffington's expression he felt recompensed for everything.

"I want to explain something to you ladies and to you too, sir," said Mr. Rand. "I'm taking you into my confidence because I know that when a woman is rightly appealed to she will stop at nothing in the way of help and sympathy. And you, Mr. Beagle, are a member of the Bar and I want to enlist your sense of justice here."

"This little girl you have known all summer as Sadie—now what is that name? Wienerwurst—is my daughter, Stephanie Rand. I hardly deserve to claim her as mine for we haven't known each other very well. Until last March she lived in New York with her aunt, the Countess von Menzell. That lady has now gone abroad to join her son who is under orders from the German government. She had planned to take this little girl with her but I managed to spirit her away and send her down here to my dear and trusted old friends, Cap'n Price and Miss Janet. To insure her safety here I thought it best for her to go by some name other than her own and it was Stephanie herself who chose to be called after—who was it, dear?"

"A girl who sat by me in Central Park," said Stephanie, never taking her eyes from her father's face.

"The one that didn't go to Coney Island with us?"
He laughed and secretly pressed her hand.

"Yes, my Daddy."

"Now, ladies and Mr. Beagle, it has been a great cross to Miss Janet Price to call her by this outlandish name but she had been introduced that way before there was any chance to make a better arrangement. Miss Janet has worried, Stephanie herself has felt exceedingly shy, and everything has appeared in a queer light. I want you to forget all this. She is my only child and besides—I might say in spite of that—is an extra fine little girl. She and Roger Smith here have just made a wonderful discovery which will straighten out, I hope, an old feud, and make several people happy."

And then Mr. Rand told them all about the buried treasure.

And finally he even told the reason of Stephanie's real name, and all the ladies shed tears when he turned to the child and said: "I wish he could have seen you. He'd have been mighty proud." When they saw his real feeling they were completely won over, for they were not ill-natured. They merely inclined to tattle and spread stories, but that is, after all, a grave fault and very common in boarding-houses.

Mrs. Piffington must have been really touched to come round as she did. For what a dreadful blow to find that while she had been, so to speak, barking up the wrong tree, a real German Countess had escaped, a child been kidnapped, and buried treasure been digged up on Great Swallow Bay!

CHAPTER XXX

CONEY OR BLUE HERON?

STEPHANIE did not get into the papers but Pirate Pinneo did—not, however, so you'd recognize him easily.

A Philadelphia sheet printed this item one day:

"It is reported from South Herring, a suburb of Montague Beach, N. J., that pirate treasure has been discovered along the shore. Two fishermen, Smith and Rosenberg, who had run aground on one of the famous Indian shell beds, are said to have dug up a buried hoard consisting of gold nuggets, jewels, and gold and silver plate, in fact the type of loot despoiled from Spanish galleons and East Indian traders in the late eighteenth century by freebooters under Kidd, Quelch, and Blackbeard. Local tradition attributes it to the work of one Pinero, a gaunt, myserious ruffian, who is remembered by the oldest inhabitant to have terrorized the then sparsely settled and dangerous coast. If this report proves true there will undoubtedly be a popular migration to the oyster beds along our eastern shore by persons to whom the get-rich-quick idea appeals."

Roger and Stephanie read this item with inexpressible scorn, and Roger said if that was the nearest those newspapers could strike it he guessed it wasn't any wonder that European war news was all mixed up.

They were both feeling very important about this time because so many people all up and down the beach wanted to hear the story and ask questions and take their pictures. Persons would get off the train asking for "the boy and girl that dug up the money" and they could neither stroll on the beach nor sail on the bay without noticing that they were being pointed out.

"You see we really discovered something important every time this year. First it was that monument; then the gang's plot against Dan, which was kind of a warning to him even if he didn't pay much attention; and last Cap'n's money bags. Pretty clever work for two kids like us, *I say*."

"I say it too," his partner nodded vigorously. They were both getting decidedly chesty and talkative, when suddenly they heard something that made them wish they had not talked so much.

"Dan, some boys are telling that people from Montague Beach went over to Pirate Pinneo's house and broke in and brought away a lot of things. They say they've carried off the wooden lady. They haven't any right there, have they? If Pirate Pinneo doesn't come back those things belong to us. Anyway they belong to Mr. Rand, because he and Stephen Price built the little shack."

Stephanie carried the same story to her father, who had just come back from a two-days' trip to Philadelphia, and he said they would sail across at once to see about it.

Dan was waiting at Blue Heron for orders. His stepbrother had written a fault-finding letter asking him to await further instructions, until "I have had time to investigate the complaints of your men." Dan was willing

to stay as long as Mr. Rand did. He and the older man were greatly attracted to each other and he seemed to take the place left vacant by that other friend and boat-mate. They were all day together on the bay and talked of winter cruises and hunting trips, but Dan said he might be far away by then.

On Crooked Point they found, indeed, signs of a party of intruders. The place where the treasure was buried had been dug all round with pitfalls; the wooden lady had had the aigrette whittled from her shoulder by a jack-knife; some of the port lights were broken. But locked door, nailed shutters, and the wooden cleats inside the battened trap-door had withstood prying hands so far.

Roger and Stephanie were deeply displeased at the damage done.

"What right had they to come? Nobody invited them."

"Nobody invited Roger Smith and Stephanie Rand," mildly suggested Mr. Rand.

"Yes, but, my Daddy, we gave care to everything while Pirate Pinneo might come back on us."

"Pirate Pinneo won't come back any more, I think."

They all exclaimed and asked questions.

"I had inquiries started some days ago, and yesterday in Philadelphia found out that a queer old fellow, answering that description, had died in the hospital at Atlantic City only a few weeks back. He was an old man, you know, almost as old as Cap'n Price, and living alone so long had unsettled his mind entirely—he must have been a bit cracked always. Evidently he kept track of what was going on along shore for his letter shows that he knew when certain enterprising parties uncovered

the old landmark, which had been lost before his time. It gave him what you might call a hunch—and a true hunch it was—that the same busybodies would be digging *him* out ere many weeks. So he went away to Atlantic City and tried to live peddling clams but took cold and died. Don't look so sad, dear; the nurse reported he told her he had something to be thankful for and that was that his conscience, which had been bad for years, was now water-tight and seaworthy. Evidently he felt sure the writing he had left behind would make everything all right."

They paid to Pirate Pinneo the tribute of sober silence for a moment. His queer dwelling basked in the sunshine and a song sparrow away in the meadow piped a little ragtime air that must have been listened to many times by the old vagabond himself from his doorway or the lookout on the roof.

"Then," asked Roger wonderingly, "who owns this house?"

"I think I do," said Mr. Rand, laughing rather shame-facedly. "At least I've started negotiations to buy the land from parties at Cape May who own a big tract through here. Perhaps it would have been more sensible to buy on the island, instead of so much bog and meadow. But who wouldn't want to buy this house? I shan't disturb a board of it but intend to build on the high ground farther in. Dan will have to help me lay out roads when he's here on his vacations."

Dan looked blank, "Vacations?"

Mr. Rand laid his hand on his shoulder and spoke with boyish eagerness. "Don't be a spoil-sport, Dan. I went round to see your stepbrother, which was none of my

business, you'll say, but I took an instantaneous dislike to the fellow and it's time you were rid of him. Let me be the means to it. I owe you a big debt already for what you did last spring. And here Roger and my daughter were just on the point of setting you up for life when I butted in and spoiled that by turning the boodle over to Cap'n Price. Seriously, Dan, let me advance money for whatever you need to make you an expert. You're cut out for bigger jobs than any you've had yet. Pay it back later if you wish. Come, say yes. Dan, we're friends. I came here thinking to miss Steve Price and I find you instead. Won't you take it from a friend?"

Dan stammered, "I had decided to go over to France and get in the big fight if I could."

"Well, it may be our fight soon. All the more reason to put good expert training behind you, if you think of that. And we'll fix up some plan for Roger too."

"Oh, Roger's schooling is paid for from my father's property."

"Good. Then you will both spend your vacations here, as I've engaged your services in putting this property in order."

Stephanie's eyes shone. "Do, my Giant, do," she begged, pulling at his hand.

Dan looked down at her and said, "All right," so shortly that a stranger must have thought he was offended. But all those present understood him and Roger immediately stood on his head in front of the wooden lady, in an abandonment of joy.

Then they all went into the house and investigated everything. Only the children had really seen the inside

before and as soon as Mr. Rand crossed the threshold he exclaimed :

" This is the same shack we put up! I remember the boards in that wall there and I believe that stove was ours—the rest has been built over. We named it 'The Pirates' Own' after a book that used to be at Cap'n's. There were three or four funny old books about Caribbean rovers and Captain Kidd, with their deeds all pictured out, that were kept in a little cabinet in Cap'n's sitting-room. You ought to find 'em, Roger."

Roger and Stephanie exchanged a glance.

They opened all the cupboards, the dresser, and the chest. Here were stored, besides a few stale biscuit and store goods, ship's lamps, ship's tinware and crockery, ship's bedding, articles of clothing from the slop-chest, ship's blankets, and a medley of corks, bottles, pumice, rope-ends, that the surf had cast up. In the chest there still lay a few bottles of rare French wine. One of the cupboards contained a brace of old silver-mounted pistols.

When they had examined also the long room with its curios Mr. Rand said :

" Do you know, I believe Pinneo had more reason for trouble in his 'conshins' than we have guessed. These little toys came out of seamen's lockers and most things here were taken from vessels that hadn't yet gone to pieces. Don't you think so, Dan? He must have gone on board of vessels before the underwriters and lifted things by wholesale."

Dan nodded. " I take him to have been a queer, furtive old fish—half-hermit, half-longshoreman—with a taste for stealing which he was rather proud of, or he

never would have taken offence with Cap'n's jokes enough to get back at him as he did."

"We must bring Cap'n Price here. I bet he would know the history of everything this house contains."

Cap'n Price had had a letter from Thomas Newbold's son, saying that they asked no more than the Cap'n's open withdrawal of the old accusation against his father. He wished his father were alive to forgive and forget, for he believed the feud had embittered all his later years. Then he went on to speak of the finding of the monument and he thought they should get together to deal with the Land Company.

There was no need for Cap'n Price to make any further public retraction, for the story was now known from one end of Cranberry County to the other. He seemed to forget much of what had passed sadly. He talked continually of Tommy Newbold, the boy he had grown up with, and when Thomas Newbold's son came he would walk and talk with him for hours, telling incidents of his youth that even Miss Janet had never heard before.

Mr. Rand promised to straighten out the business affairs of the Cap'n and Miss Janet, but first it was necessary for him to go up to New York for a few weeks. And he didn't propose to go to New York alone. Stephanie went with him.

During those weeks in New York one day was especially touched with high lights, for Roger came to the city to spend the day. Mr. Rand and Stephanie met him at the station and then they all sped northward to pick up another passenger.

In the plate-glass window before which their car drew

up there were mounds of salad, strings of sausage, bowls of pickles; there were pressed meats, sauerkraut, dill pickles, codfish balls, spaghetti, and baked beans. And in raised letters on the glass was a name which caused Roger to let out a whistle.

WIENERWURST DELICATESSEN

They did not have to wait long, for things had been arranged by telephone by Mr. Rand. Out of a stairway at one side of the shop somebody came flying, somebody whom Stephanie instantly recognized though she wore no plush coat and no cap *mit* buttons.

"Hullo, kid," said Sadie, the *real* Sadie.

"Hullo," said Stephanie. Then they both felt bashful.

Mr. Rand helped Sadie into the car and as she sat down on the rear seat with Stephanie between her and Roger she whispered:

"That your pop?"

"Yes."

"Hm!" said Sadie. Then the hostess remembered her manners and said:

"This is Roger Smith from Blue Heron, New Jersey."

"From Philadelphia, you mean," said Roger.

"Philadelphia? That's a dead town," said Sadie. Roger disputed this and they all fell into an animated conversation which lasted till they found themselves at Coney Island.

When Sadie found that two of the party had never been to that resort before she assumed an air of partnership with Mr. Rand.

"Say, they never bumped the bumps. Don't you think we'd better try it? Pop takes us sometimes," she would say, digging her little elbow into the side of the tall, distinguished gentleman. He never once refused to follow a suggestion of hers, and going home after their glorious day she whispered to Stephanie:

"I like your Pop. There's no rough-neck about him."

There was a question Stephanie had been all day making up her mind to ask.

"Sadie, did you come to see me at the Hotel Juilliard that day I asked you to?"

"Sure. Skated down through the park and then walked round to your place. There was a man in funny clothes turning the glass door, but he looked kind of absent-minded so I just skipped in and asked a fellow that sat behind a counter, and *he* said, 'Miss Rawnd just pawssed through the lobby with her noyce,' he said."

"It was a mistake, Sadie. I should not ask you that day, for I must go to Blue Heron yet and it is while you talk so much of your pop I want you to see my—my beautiful daddy, but he understand not and meets me by a ferry and there was no Coney Island then."

Sadie laughed. "Now when you talk fast you talk that dago way again."

Mr. Rand turned round and said:

"Sadie, you say you are all good Americans at your house?"

"Well, I guess. My pop has lived here twenty years and all of us got born here, Fritz and Emma and Walter and Klaus and Sophie and the baby. You think we like some other country now? I should worry. America is good enough for *us*, my pop says."

So before they parted Mr. Rand and Stephanie went into the shop to shake hands with Mr. Wienerwurst and Stephanie promised some day to go upstairs and see Fritz and Emma and Walter and Klaus and Sophie and the baby.

"I'd like that they should all come to Blue Heron sometime too," she told her father as they rode away. "For you see I borrowed from Sadie something which I used a long time."

"Certainly, they all shall come to see us at the new house on Crooked Point."

"Whew!" said Roger, "don't let Cap'n Price get wind of any more Wienerwursts."

They drove downtown a different way and as they drew near a certain corner Mr. Rand gave an order and suddenly Stephanie found herself before a familiar stately entrance. She turned pale and shrank back in the corner of the cushioned seat. Seeing this, her father said: "You needn't go in, dear, but if I'm not mistaken there's still a friend of yours left here, and at this hour I may be able to bring him out to speak to you."

A moment later Gaston Jeannerot stood beside the car, bareheaded, overwhelmed with pleasure.

"Mademoiselle, it is to rejoice. Ah, but what a change, Monsieur! The life, the color, the plumpness of mademoiselle! I can scarce believe it is the same child who ate always in the shadow of a German. Has Monsieur any news of Madame von Menzell?"

"Not very recent, Gaston. She is in Germany and we don't want to hear much news from there."

"The heart of madame was ever there. And I, Mon-

sieurs and Mademoiselle, another week and I set sail for my good land, to defend her soil."

With blessings and good wishes they left Stephanie's first true friend. Then they helped Roger to collect all the souvenirs and odds and ends he was to take down to Blue Heron, after spending the night in Philadelphia, and they saw him off, sending messages to Cap'n, to Miss Janet, and to Dan, all of whom they expected soon to see.

Mr. Alan Rand, as they drove away eastward in the evening light, drew his daughter's hand in his.

"Were you pleased with Coney Island?"

"Yes, my Daddy. It has been a glorious day and I like Coney much but not so much as Blue Heron, yes? I find so much there which I love."

"And I found one thing there which I love best," he said.

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